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Chang, Shin, Ph.D.

University of Colorado at Boulder, 1990

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THE *JIA* AND DESCENT IDEOLOGY: CHINESE IN RURAL MALAYSIA

by

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A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of the Graduate School of the

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of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Anthropology

1990

This thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy degree by

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has been approved for the

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by

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The *jia* and Descent Ideology: Chinese in Rural Malaysia

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Dennis B. McGilvray

Since the early 1950s a number of respected studies have shown that full-scale Chinese agnatic lineage organization as it existed in traditional mainland villages has not been perpetuated in overseas Chinese communities in east and southeast Asia. However, shallow agnatically-defined kinship groups do still exist in these overseas communities in the form of dispersed or extended families linked by a common sense of identity as agnates or patrilineally-related kinsmen. This study attempts to circumscribe and situate this shallow, less formal type of kinship group and to investigate how traditional Chinese descent ideology still defines and organizes it from the viewpoint of its members. Based on ethnographic data collected in several rural Chinese communities in Malacca, Malaysia, this thesis identifies the locus of descent ideology as the dispersed or extended family group, the *jia*. Evidence suggests that this descent-based *jia* lacks the formal corporate features of the earlier mainland Chinese patrilineages studied by Freedman and others: its economic base tends to be divided and diversified, its internal authority structure tends to be diffused, and its estate or jointly held property--thought by some authors to be essential to

Chinese lineage organization--is often lacking. Nevertheless, it shares the same agnatic descent principle which underlies the more complex lineage systems of mainland China and Taiwan. Despite their lack of a strong corporate lineage organization, the Chinese in rural Malacca seem to be strongly committed to seeing themselves as members of a family group which is self-consciously based upon traditional agnatic descent ideas and values. This study concludes that the jia in Malaysia remains a conceptual unit, a strong focus of kinship identity which is also capable of adapting to changing social, economic, and political environments. As a group defined by a cultural conception of agnatic descent and links to the ancestors, the jia remains important without being sustained by common property.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to my advisor Dennis McGilvray, for intellectual stimulation over the years, and for his critical reading and suggestions on several drafts of this dissertation. To my other committee members, Paul Shankman, Charles Piot, Gorden Hewes, and James Hargett I wish to express my appreciation for their confidence in my work. To Dennis McGilvray and Robert Hackenberg I owe my theoretical training in graduate school.

I owe a great deal to the people who became a part of this work. I am indebted to the people of Nan Mei, Huang Jia Shan, Sa Le, and several other Chinese communities in rural Malacca for their hospitality. Special thanks are due to Tay Chow, Poh Lien, Foo Yu Lan and their families for their unconditional assistance.

My parents and siblings have given me both moral and financial assistance whenever I needed them. My children, Tun Kai and Tun Min, have been supportive in their own special ways. I owe this work to my father, my late mother, all my siblings, my children, and George who stands by me in both good and bad times.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My interest in the Chinese family springs from my experiences as a member of three Chinese families: my natal family in Taiwan, my affinal family in rural Malaysia, and my own conjugal family in urban Malaysia. Though seemingly all Chinese, there are notable differences in their internal organizations and external relations. But the basic ideology of the family as a descent group weaves through daily life and social behavior in all three families. This basic ideology of the family as a descent group is the main concern of this study.

Problem Statement

The descent group and the descent ideology that organize society were anthropologists' main concern in the structural-functional schools, especially in Great Britain. Structural-functional anthropologists discovered the existence of descent groups primarily in primitive societies in Africa and the islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The descent group is defined as a corporate unit that owns property, particularly

land. Membership is prescribed, and its members share rights and duties. According to Maine, a corporation never dies (Maine 1861). Fortes elaborated on Maine's definition and suggested that the descent group, the lineage, has perpetual physical and structural existence (Fortes 1953).

Defining the descent and the descent group has been the subject of long debates in the discipline. Among others, Fortes expressed the view that there can be only two kinds of descent group, patrilineal and matrilineal (Fortes 1959;1969). Goodenough, on the other hand, proposed that there are many kinds of descent groups, not only patrilineal and matrilineal, but also nonunilineal, with restricted and unrestricted varieties of each (Goodenough 1970). In a recent article, Scheffler argued that based on descent rights and duties, he tends to agree with Rivers (1914;1924) and Fortes that only unilineally constituted groups should be described as descent groups (Scheffler 1986).

While there is ongoing discussion concerning the descent ideology and the descent group, this study does not intend to further that debate. The Chinese descent system is patrilineal in nature. Exceptions do exist, but they appear to be situational adjustments in order to conform to the patrilineal ideology. Uxorilocal marriage and adoption are two such examples. In this study,

Freedman's definition of the Chinese descent group has been adopted. From Freedman's framework, discussions on the Chinese descent ideology and descent group will develop.

Freedman's interpretation (based on the Africanists' tradition) of the Chinese lineage system was presented in his classics, Lineage Organization in Southeastern China (1958), and Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung (1966). Lineage in China is recognized as a land based corporate unit. Members of this agnatic descent group share the same surname, maintain an ancestral hall, perform ancestor worship, own and exploit land and other property as a unit, have a centralized leadership, and share equal responsibility to the lineage. Lineage segmentation can occur and it is asymmetrical in nature. Freedman suggested that the lineage system is most prominent in the provinces of Fukien and Kwangtung.

Studies on Chinese lineage organization carried out in Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s mostly supported Freedman's lineage framework for China. Similar studies of Chinese communities outside mainland China and Hong Kong, on the other hand, found that lineage organization does not exist outside its homeland. For instance, social organization more similar to that of the western world was found in Singapore. Freedman commented that

the development of a modern form of social organization is a response to the new political and economic environments by the transplanted Chinese immigrant community (1953). (Additional review of the literature is presented in Chapter II.)

Studies on the Chinese social organization in Taiwan shed new light on the discussion. These studies began as test cases of lineage organization in a Chinese immigrant community outside mainland China. Most studies concluded that the lineage system has weakened considerably in Taiwanese communities. (Taiwanese Chinese communities existed for over 200 years before a new wave of Chinese immigration occurred when the Communist government took over the mainland in 1949. These newer immigrants have been termed mainlanders.) The conclusion derived from these studies indicated that the intensity of lineage organization appears to be responsive to political and economic contexts.

Most scholars of Chinese social organization have viewed the Chinese descent group as a corporate unit with land holdings being essential to its existence. When land is absent, the descent group either was ignored by anthropologists who preferred to study landed descent groups with observable lineage organization, such as the lineage hall and hall worship, or, it was considered to lack proper lineages. Almost all studies carried out by

Freedman and his successors in Hong Kong and the New Territories focused mainly on the landed descent groups with lineage organization. The boat people in Hong Kong, for instance, were considered as having no lineage system because of the absence of land (Anderson 1970). As a corporation, an estate is a necessary criterion for the definition of the descent group. When applying this definition to descent groups without a substantial estate base, this corporate lineage model becomes inadequate. In his discussion of Chinese families, Freedman proposed different analytical models for the rich and the poor (1960;1966). This further suggests the analytical problem Freedman faced in dealing with descent groups without a land base.

Like Freedman's, most anthropological studies of Chinese lineage systems are structurally oriented. They focus on the structure of social groups, based on the descent principle. The idea of descent as a conceptual or symbolic system has been largely overshadowed. Francis Hsu in his 1963 work, Clan, Caste, and Club, criticized Freedman for emphasizing social structure, thus overlooking ideas and cultural definitions. Hsu proposed the study of the "content" of culture. Regardless of the problem inherent in Hsu's approach, his concern with the ideological principle of culture is a valid one. My observations of the Chinese family as a

descent group lead me to believe that descent in a Chinese community is an important conceptual system. The ideology of descent and the descent group exists in communities with formal lineage organization as well as communities without formal lineage organization. Perhaps the ideology of descent should be given a more significant place in the study of Chinese social organization than the lineage organization itself.

This study argues that descent is a conceptual system that organizes social relationships in Chinese society regardless of actual lineage organization. Thus we should see the same descent ideology that solidifies the lineage organization also prevailing in Chinese communities where lineage organization is absent. It is further argued that the descent ideology is adaptive. But its evolution may appear to be slower than that of the structure of social organization.

The focus of this study is the descent ideology and descent groups in a Chinese community in rural Malaysia. The rural Chinese community is preferred to the urban Chinese community because most Chinese urbanites have rural roots. It is a Chinese tradition that during the New Year celebration and other important calendrical dates people return to their _kampong_, their rural home. The primary concern of this study is the Chinese descent ideology and how it is expressed. The

study is based on fieldwork among rural Chinese in the state of Malacca, Malaysia, carried out in 1986. It is also based on informal observations of descent groups during my ten-year residence in Malaysia, from 1972 to 1982.

Method and Fieldwork

The two primary methods used in gathering relevant information for this study are participant observation and questionnaire survey. The former allows the anthropologist to observe the subtle expressions of culture in daily life, and it ensures minimal conscious modification of behavior on the informants' part. The latter permits the anthropologist to obtain systemically selected information which usually is difficult to obtain using participant observation. Life history was also collected to provide additional information for the understanding of the descent group.

The physical locality of the observation site is the New Village. New Village is a British colonial term used to designate resettlements formed during the 1948-1960 Emergency period (a time of Communist insurgency) in Malaya. One tenth of the total Chinese population in the Malay Peninsula in the 1940s was placed in these settlements during the Emergency. Today, the total Chinese population in the New Villages approximates 35%

of the total Chinese population in West Malaysia. Although artificial in origin, the New Village represents a rural Chinese aggregate that is probably the least influenced by the local Malay culture. A more informative discussion on the New Village will be presented in Chapter III.

The unit of analysis is the jia, a native concept of the basic descent group. Various other anthropological terms have been used to describe this basic descent group, among them, the family, household, and compound. Jia is preferred in this study because it describes various structural arrangements of the descent unit. In addition, the jia as a descent group is inclusive of all members whether they live under the same roof, participate in circular migration, or set up separate households.

Informal observations of the social structure of the Malaysian Chinese and social relationships among the Malaysian peoples were made from 1972 through 1982. I went from Taiwan to Malaysia in 1972 as the wife of a Malaysian Chinese, and consequently a daughter-in-law of a rural Chinese jia. Through my own experience in the process of becoming a Malaysian Chinese, I have had the opportunity to participate in daily life, take part in jia life crises, and incidentally learn the inside stories of the jia and the Chinese community. The

personal contacts I established through this jia and its network, form the resource base through which my fieldwork became possible.

In 1986, I went back to Malaysia for ten months of formal fieldwork. I chose two study sites. One was chosen because I was familiar with the site; one of my sisters-in-law lived there. The other study site was selected because it was comparable to the first site in many ways except for its economic base. It also turned out that another of my sisters-in-law had residence there. In fact, through their introduction and guan xi (connections), I was accepted as a part of the local community within a comparatively short time. This connection expedited the fieldwork.

The two selected study sites are two New Villages of different economic base. A total of 126 family groups compose the main database. A third New Village was visited but information from that village was incomplete. Information from the third New Village and from several neighboring Chinese villages will be used to supplement data derived from the first two New Villages. Place and person names are fictitious.

Nan Mei New Village is predominantly a Hokkien speaking community. Huang Jia Shan New Village is primarily a Hakka speaking community. Both are composed of Chinese who have shallow roots in Malaysia. The

Chinese dialect used to conduct my study is Chinese Mandarin. Except for the very old, all residents speak Mandarin. I believe that not being able to conduct the research in Hakka and Hokkien did not hinder communication significantly.

With the exception of the survey questionnaire, all interview and discussion information was recorded after the conversation with the informant in order to avoid unnecessary embarrassment and suspicion. Informants covered a wide range of age groups. But most interviewees I talked to during the questionnaire survey were women or men who had retired from income earning activities outside the home. Some of them are elderly, some are daughters-in-law with young children at home. The latter almost always consulted or confirmed with the elders for information concerning the _jia_. Informal conversations with the residents were carried out mostly during the day time as night visits by a female were considered improper unless accompanied by local residents.

Besides the data gathered from the two primary communities, I visited three industrial factories in the neighboring Industrial Estates and surveyed 120 workers to gain information relating to background of workers who chose to work in the Industrial Estate. This information helps explain how economic decisions were made by

community members.

Background data relating to the socio-economic and political environments of Malaysia and the historical background of Chinese Malaysians were gathered from the National Archives of Malaysia, the Statistics Department of Malaysia, the Department of Labor and Man Power, and the University of Malaya Library. Additional information was obtained from the Central Malacca District Office, the Survey Department of Malacca, and the State Economic Development Cooperation of Malacca.

The analytical approach used here is the comparative approach. Similarities and differences between the jia in communities of different economic bases are analyzed. Comparisons of jia arrangements at different stages of development are also made. The jia of the past and the present are discussed. Comparison of descent ideology of the past pre-supposes a knowledge of the system in the Chinese homeland and in earlier Malaya. References to lineage organization and descent ideology in the homeland are based primarily on studies by Freedman and his associates. References to Chinese social organization in Malaya and Malaysia are primarily from Freedman's Chinese Family and Marriage in Singapore (1953), T'ien's The Chinese of Sarawak (1953), and Newell's Treacherous River (1962). Hsu's work Clan, Caste, and Club (1963), Hu's The Common Descent Group in

China and its Functions (1948), and Liu's "An Analysis of Chinese Clan Rules" (1959) provide substantial information on Chinese descent ideology in general.

Native Anthropology

It has been a well developed tradition that anthropologists study cultures other than their own, and that relativism is the key principle in anthropological analysis. Both principles have been challenged in recent years.

Sass, in a recent article, cited Bourdieu's criticism of anthropologists' "illusions" in the name of objectivity. Bourdieu stated that anthropologists' objectivism often resulted in the observed being placed in a static mode of existence devoid of dynamism and unpredictability. This detached objectivism is unwittingly biased with the observers' own experience and attitude. Sass also cited Taussing and Rosado's view that the specialness and the "exotic" behavior of the natives often blind the observer to normal, everyday life, leaving blind spots in descriptions (Sass 1986:55-56). Watson in reviewing ethnographic discourse also raised the question of relativism in ethnographic writing. He suggested that reflexivity is not something which one does, but is an essential and inevitable property of all discourse. Anthropologists often fail to

acknowledge that reflexivity is inherent in ethnographic writing. Watson noted that our data are determined by our interests and that we have a tendency to project our own cultural bias onto the one being studied (Watson 1987:38). The anthropologist is thereby challenged to confront his own reflexivity in ethnographic writing and in detached relativism.

While anthropology must confront the problems of relativism and reflexivity, some anthropologists have begun doing research among their own people. Jones proposed the development of native anthropology based on two research projects he carried out in Thailand and in Denver (1970). Jones discussed the inherent problems of native anthropology and western oriented anthropology, among them the possibility of the native anthropologist taking social phenomena for granted, of mistrust by the observed, of the native anthropologist's feelings of conscience in data publication. However, after balancing the pros and cons, he endorsed the idea of and the future of native anthropology. He defines native anthropology as the anthropologist studying his own people and developing "a set of theories based on non-Western precepts and assumptions in the same sense that modern anthropology is based on and has supported Western beliefs and values" (Jones 1970:251). In a recent AAA meeting, some young anthropologists in the U.S. called

for the study of our own culture by native anthropologists, using anthropological method to further the understanding of the American culture (Marchetti and English-Lueck 1987).

This study represents the work of a native anthropologist. Being an insider, a member of the Malaysian Chinese community, I have the advantage of sharing a great deal of the cultural knowledge of the people I study. The ten-month fieldwork served as a time during which I was able to look deeper into one important aspect of the Chinese culture. Being a Malaysian Chinese allowed me easier access to the content of the culture, but at the same time, my native status did not make fieldwork simpler. Like other non-native anthropologists, I did experience some degree of mistrust by the people.

During the fieldwork, my anthropological training reminded me constantly to maintain relative objectivity; through-out the course of this writing, I have tried to confront my own reflexivity without sacrificing the information, with the hope that the ethnography this native anthropologist produces will not degenerate into a "narcissistic" report.

Organization of Dissertation

Chapter I describes the intent of the study and the methodology of the study. Chapter II gives an overview of the literature in the field of Chinese descent systems. This chapter also charts the direction of the dissertation. Chapters III and IV briefly summarize the historical and economic contexts of the Chinese in Malaysia in general, and the rural Chinese in the New Village in particular. The research sites are described in detail in Chapters IV. Chapters V and VI define and describe the conceptual system of descent ideology and the descent group as observed in rural Chinese communities in Malaysia. Chapter VII puts the conceptual system in behavioral terms. Chapter VIII summarizes the arguments and presents the conclusions.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND DESCENT IDEOLOGY OF THE CHINESE

The descent ideology, or the jia zu guan nian in Chinese, defines the social relationships and the social organization of traditional Chinese society. The basic social unit of Chinese society is the kinship based family. Beyond the family is the common descent based family group, the jia. In an elaborate form this common descent based family group is the zu, or the clan as Chinese scholars prefer to call it, or the lineage as described by most western scholars. Beyond the zu, there is the state. The jia is thus the "incubator of morality and a microcosm of the state" (Creel 1949:125-128; Lin 1939:172-80). The descent ideology in Chinese society is patrilineal based, which defines the membership as including the male descendants of the common ancestors and the spouses of the male members. The descent ideology not only forms the conceptual framework that defines the membership of this social grouping, but also prescribes the proper behavior of its members.

The Chinese descent based institution seems to have been important even in Shang time, the earliest state level society of Chinese history (Creel 1949:126).

The earliest recorded common descent groups in China can be traced to the tribal society that developed into the state under the Shang (-1123 B.C.) and the Chou (1122-222 B.C.) dynasties (Hu 1948:11). Rules that sanction proper conduct for the members of the common descent groups were already formulated in pre-Confucian China, and they were recorded in such classics as The Book of History, and The Classic of Filial Piety, to mention two. For example, according to The Book of History, the emperors of Yao and Shun (2357-2206 B.C.), and their successor Yu the Great, announced and received their appointment of office at the temple of the ancestors; and Yao during his reign promoted affection and love among the "nine classes of relations" (Su 1922:18;38). Proper interpersonal behavior institutionalized during the Shun time was also recorded in Mencius (5th Century B.C.) and The Book of Li (written in the Han dynasty, 206 B.C. to 220 A.D.). Shun was supposed to have formulated the "five cardinal duties." He taught his people that "between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity." The three family related duties constitute the basis of the Chinese family law code of succeeding periods (Su 1922:21-22). The present family law code of China and

Taiwan are still based on these principles.

The basic value which the descent ideology promotes is continuity and perpetuation of the group through the patrilineal line. This basic value is sanctioned by the Confucian doctrine of filial piety. Confucian expressions such as: "Of all the virtues, filial piety is the first;" and "Of the three offenses against filial piety, lacking descendants is the worst" (as cited in Hsu 1963:29) strongly influence the behavior of individuals. The deep rooted concept of an individual male being a small but significant part of a large descent group, and the concept of each male descendant being an indispensable link of a long chain, i.e., a continuous descent line extending from the past into the future, express this basic value of group continuity. Confucius did not invent or add new components to the Chinese institution of the descent group, but Confucianism might be defined as the philosophy of the Chinese family system. To analyze how the Confucian doctrine sanctions the descent system would be a pursuit of its own.

The study of the social organization of the Chinese has been greatly influenced by British anthropologist Maurice Freedman. Freedman's work in Southeastern China, in Kwangtong and Fukien, and later in Hong Kong and the New Territories, convinced him and

other Sinologists that Chinese society is built on the lineage system based on the principle of patrilineal descent. The descent ideology consolidates communities into localized corporate lineage groups (Freedman 1958;1966). Most later studies on Chinese society follow Freedman's tradition and expand further on his "generalized lineage model" (Pasternak 1985). Watson described Freedman's contribution as "...a paradigm in the sense that it assumes a fundamental of Chinese society based on an ideology of patrilineal descent" (1982:591).

Subsequent studies on Chinese communities show that a wide range of variations of social organization exist in Chinese communities, both within China and Hong Kong, and outside mainland China. Lineage organizations tend to be weaker further away from the mainland, geographically and temporally. In many Chinese communities, the non-lineage agnatic cluster has been identified as the dominant social grouping on the local level. The organizing principle of this agnatic cluster, however, is patrilineal descent.

Though the underlying principle of organization remains the same, most of the studies of Chinese society focus primarily on the structural aspects of social organization. The patrilineal descent ideology is taken for granted and often overshadowed. This study attempts

to investigate the Chinese society from a reversed vantage point, to examine how descent ideology operates in the Chinese community.

This chapter begins by reviewing the literature concerning descent ideology and its role in the organization of society. The focus will be on how descent ideology is expressed, first in its Chinese homeland, secondly in overseas contexts, and thirdly in rural Malaysia today. The direction of investigation for this study will be presented at the end of the chapter.

Descent Ideology in Homeland China

The most important anthropological work on Chinese social organization in the homeland is Freedman's Lineage Organization in Southeastern China (1958) and Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung (1966). Freedman identified the lineage system as the foundation of social organization in southeastern China. The lineage is defined as a property owning corporate unit which recruits membership based on descent, and consolidates its unity by way of ritual and jural means. He observed that the lineages segment asymmetrically into sublineages (fang). Each sublineage is composed of households or compounds. Each household is a resource-pooling economic unit which can be in the form of an elementary family or an extended family. The household

is identified as the fundamental unit of Chinese society.

The local lineage is thus a corporate agnatic group living in one settlement or a tight cluster of settlements. According to Freedman, a lineage can be dispersed, but there is recognition of a headquarters group for the dispersed lineage. If local lineages share an ancestral hall or estate, and have shared ritual obligations, then there exists a higher-order lineage. When lineages of like surname form ties based on genealogy but do not form a group with common interests and activities, these lineages are linked by ties of clanship.

A village may be a single lineage unit, or a multi-lineage unit. A village, therefore, is not an undivided unit. It can be segmented by the kinship groups, and stratified by internal economic and political differentiation. Freedman suggested that "the desire to form a single lineage in one village territory is a motive given in the system" (1966:8).

Clanship, higher-order lineage, lineage, sublineage, and household are kinship based units. In Chinese society, this kinship tie is defined by patrilineal descent. Descent groups had been described by scholars before Freedman (for example, Kulp 1925, Lin 1947, Hu 1948, Yang 1949, Liu 1959), but it was Freedman who formalized the framework of descent group analysis of

Chinese society.

Wolf, while paying tribute to Freedman's contribution to the study of Chinese social organization, traced Freedman's roots to African lineage studies (Wolf 1985:4). The sources of Freedman's inspiration are Radcliffe-Brown and Forde's African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, and Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's African Political Systems. The jural aspects of Freedman's analysis reflect the traditions of Fortes and Maine. (Briefly mentioned on pages 1-2 of this study.) The significance of Freedman's paradigm for the study of social organization is the successful application of lineage studies from the context of "savagery" to "civilization" (using Malinowski's words as cited in Freedman 1963:380).

Descent Ideology Beyond the Homeland

Freedman's descent paradigm was applied to studies in the New Territories, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, after mainland China was closed to social research due to the changing political situation of the late 1940s. Studies in Hong Kong and the New Territories are largely an extension of Freedman's work in southeastern China. Potter's fieldwork in the New Territories was aimed specifically at testing Freedman's model on the internal structure of the lineage system. His data from the Tangs

of Hang Mei sublineage "confirmed Freedman's analysis in all important respects and supported his hypotheses about the importance of ancestral property in determining the nature of the internal segmentation of Chinese lineage" (1970:121). The segmentation process is enabled by the ability of the lineage to establish ancestral property. Wealth and ancestral property thus determine the distribution of the political power within Chinese lineages. And the asymmetrical structure of the lineage ensures that power is not equally distributed among the segments. Potter concluded that "...common property was the most important single element maintaining the traditional lineage organization" (1970:130). Ritual structure, in terms of the ancestor cult, closely follows and supports the social structure of the lineage, and both are closely related to the economic structure of the lineage. The economic benefit of the lineage system attracts the support and loyalty of its members.

R. Watson (1982) suggests that fusion may be another process of lineage formation. Her data from the Deng lineage in the New territories show that the Deng lineage was formed through the process of fusion rather than segmentation. The Deng lineage data supported her argument that there is no uniform process of lineage formation in China. Pasternak's discussion on lineage cooperation and defense based on data from a Hakka

settlement in Taiwan suggested that in response to the hazards of predatory neighbors, consolidation of different surname agnatic groups could be a solution (1968;1969). Pasternak's hypothesis pointed to the same direction R. Watson argued more than a decade later.

J. Watson pointed out the possibility that a bureaucratic elite model of social organization might be simulated by people, and lineage organization could have been "consciously created by people" (1982:604). Watson's suggestion has not been supported by later researchers.

Because of the emphasis given to the lineage system, it is often assumed that most Chinese live in lineage communities. Studies in the New Territories and in Taiwan provided ample evidence that such is not the case. J. Watson postulated that even in rural Kwangtung, "no more than 30% of the male population belonged to well-organized lineages...The majority of peasants lived in communities that were not dominated by a single lineage..." (1982:606). Potter cautioned researchers against always correlating single-surname villages with strong lineage organization. He reported that in Kwangtung Province, where large and powerful lineages exist, the number of such lineages is only a small percentage of the total number of lineages in any given area. In the several hundred villages in the Hong Kong

New Territories, only a few lineages were really prominent (1970:130-131).

Strauch in her 1983 article questioned the single-lineage paradigm. She stated that "...scholarly fascination with the highly visible and politically dominant elite lineages has unfortunately fostered the relative neglect of social groupings of other sorts" (1983:21). The other sorts of social groupings include smaller localized kin groups, some with rudimentary lineage organization, some lacking any formal organization and structure. Smaller lineages and the multi-lineage communities they constitute are thus an essential part of the total landscape of society in the south China coastal region. Using data from a multi-lineage village in the New Territories, Fung Yuen, Strauch demonstrated that in many multi-lineage villages like Fung Yuen, lineage solidarity coexists harmoniously with community solidarity, which is effectively legitimated through a liberal extension of the patrilineal ideology. "...Patrilineal ideology exerts an undeniable influence...But to grant it the exclusive power it wields in the elite lineages would mean forfeit of a village solidarity that in traditional times was on occasion essential to survival" (1983:22).

Data from Taiwan shed new light on Chinese social organization. Most of the Taiwan studies support

the thesis that prestigious, visible lineages are not the dominant feature of the Chinese communities. In fact, strong lineages such as the Tangs of the New Territories Freedman described never developed in Taiwan. In dealing with the diversity of the Chinese lineage, Freedman suggested an A to Z continuum based on internal complexity and corporate activity. A Z type of lineage has extensive landholding, properties, complex internal segmentation, a hierarchy of ancestral halls, an ancestral cult, written genealogies, ancestral graves, a self-defence corps, educational facilities, and a large membership of two or three thousand people. An A type of lineage has no common property except the ancestral graves. There is no ancestral cult, no written genealogy, and for protection, the A type lineage places itself under the dominance of a strong lineage. (Freedman 1958:131-133) Ahern (1973) and Pasternak (1972) found the presence of lineages approximately equivalent to Freedman's mid range type of lineage organization on the A to Z continuum. Gallin studied Hsin Hsing village on Taiwan. He discovered that Hsin Hsing is a multi-surname, non-lineage community, where affinal and matrilateral relationship are more important there than clan [agnatic] relationships (1960). Harrell found at Ploughshare community the total absence of lineage organization and the presence of agnatically related

groups with strong affinal, matrilateral and neighborhood ties as well as agnatic ties (1976; 1981). Similar to Gallin's and Harrell's findings, Cohen's work in Yen-liao (1976) and M. Wolf's study in Hotien (1968) found no evidence of lineage organization. The results of these Taiwanese studies are congruous with Strauch's study of Fung Yuen in the New Territories. Taiwanese communities often contain multi-lineage and/or multi-surname agnatic groups. The multi-surname groups often do not have formal corporate organization, but are loosely-defined agnatic groups. As in Fung Yuen, patrilineal ideology coexists with a community solidarity based on a liberal extension of the patrilineal ideology.

The questions that arise in conjunction with these studies of Chinese social organizations are: if Chinese society is supposedly organized by the lineage system as Freedman and Potter suggested, why do some communities have stronger lineage organizations while others have weaker ones? Why do some lineages weaken over time? And why do some communities show no evidence of the existence of the lineage? Freedman (1958;1966), Cohen (1968), Potter (1970), Pasternak (1968;1985), Anderson (1970), and Watson (1975;1982) all attempt to present a comprehensive explanation to these questions. Briefly stated, the diversity of lineage organizations and the absence or presence of the lineage system depends

closely on the social and political context, as Freedman himself later pointed out (1979:346;1958;1966). Both Freedman and Potter hypothesized that rice agriculture and irrigation, residential compactness, degree of governmental control in a given area, internal competition, and the frontier conditions are essential ecological, political and economic conditions for the development of a lineage village. They both emphasized the importance of common property in the forms of land and commercial property as essential for the existence and development of the lineage system. Anderson proposed that rice paddy economy and land are the keystone of the lineage system. Anderson's conclusions were derived from his analysis of the boat people in the New Territories. Observing that the boat people maintain the ideology of ancestor worship yet do not have the lineage corporate system and lineage ritual activities, Anderson concluded that "...Once the keystone of the system--the rice paddy--is removed, the system fails. When the more radical step of removing all land and agriculture is taken, the system disappears" (1970:364).

Pasternak proposed several modifications to the formulations of Freedman and Potter. After studying the situation in Taiwan, he listed the following factors as among the most important in explaining the absence or presence of the lineage system: "initial settlement

pattern, the distribution of wealth, and the need for cooperation across agnatic lines for economic or defense purposes" (1972:149). Pasternak, comparing two Taiwanese communities, Ta-tieh and Chung-she, proposed a process of "agnatic atrophy." Under competitive frontier conditions, and under unfavorable political pressures from the Japanese colonial administrators, patrilineal agnatic bonds gave way to non-kin bonds in Ta-tieh village. Ta-tieh village evolved from a community with rudimentary lineages to one without a lineage system in the time between the 1930s and 1952. (1968;1972)

Potter discussed in his 1970 essay the attractions (advantages) of the lineage organization to its members. The economic and political advantages of belonging to a lineage help keep the members clinging to the lineage organization, further solidifying the lineage (1970:127-130). Watson's study of the emigrant community of the Man lineage in the New Territories, San Tin, provided further evidence which supports the adaptive advantage thesis of the lineage organization. The Man lineage was based on rice farming until the agricultural crisis occurred, during the years from 1957 to 1962. Emigration to England to work for Chinese restaurants replaced rice farming as the main economic base of the Man male lineage members after 1962. The advantages of being a Man lineage member facilitated emigration, and

the profits of the restaurant economy were invested back in the San Tin Man lineage corporation and its ritual activities, thus further consolidating the Man lineage organization. Watson called this process a "conservative change." "Instead of modernizing, the villagers cling to the shadows of their past history. The result is a pattern of lagging emulation in which the Mans seek to attain high status...by upholding a way of life that is no longer meaningful or important to large numbers of New Territories residents" (Watson 1975:216-218). The Man lineage example is one of the exceptional cases where conservatism preserved the lineage organization, rather than changing the lineage to a more adaptive organizational form.

As the above discussion has shown, most recent studies emphasized the fact that the local political and economic context greatly affects the configurations of the descent-principle based social groupings. Descent ideology, which is the organizing principle of the lineage, has found new expressions beyond the homeland conditions. Discussions from the New Territories, and from Taiwan during the frontier period of Chinese immigration demonstrated such an adaptation. Chinese communities in the South Seas (Nanyang) provide further evidence. The descent based agnatic unit becomes the family group, variously termed by scholars as the

household, the compound, the domestic group, or the jia. The social institutions above the family group level are locally developed organizations, operated by an ideology extended from, and emulating, the descent ideology underlying the lineage system.

Extensions of the Descent Ideology

Descent groups in the form of Freedman's Z type lineage did not develop on Taiwan. Such descent based grouping was not found in the immigrant Chinese communities in Thailand, Indonesia, Sarawak, Singapore, nor in West Malaysia. This is often attributed to the shallow genealogy of the immigrant Chinese due to late settlement, the frontier conditions of the new settlements in the Nanyang, and heterogeneity of the immigrant population (Freedman 1953).

Freedman suggested that frontier conditions encourage the formation of large local agnatic groups that will provide safety from neighboring groups. Pasternak, based on Sahlin's predatory expansion concept, argued that for purposes of offense and defense, rather than forming single-surname large corporate local lineages, it is more likely that the immigrant community would integrate into higher-order associations or alliances through the extension of agnatic and affinal kin and non-kin affiliations. He stipulated that the

realization of the patrilineal ideology may be part of the second phase of settlement in frontier environments (1969:554).

Though Pasternak's stipulation of second phase development has yet to be realized, he was correct in pointing out that the agnatic kinship groupings and the higher-order associations evolved through the extension of the same agnatic principle which used to organize the lineage system. In addition, affinal ties and non-kin affiliations were evoked to meet the need to organize the community for economic and defense purposes. The Chinese did not transfer the lineage organization overseas, but in their new environment the early immigrant Chinese did organize themselves based on a framework that can be identified in the homeland. Watson called this the result of people using "conscious strategy" to organize themselves in contexts outside the kinship system (1982).

The Chinese in the first Division of Sarawak, studied by T'ien in the late 1940s, were immigrants in the present century or descents of these immigrants. Most of these immigrants came to Sarawak for agricultural or commercial crop production. T'ien described them as at their first stage of capital accumulation (1953:1). Before the twentieth century, the most well-known social organization among the Borneo Chinese was the <u>kongsi</u>, which was considered as a local "republic" in today's

sense. It had its own army, and an administrative hierarchy (Ward 1954; Wong 1966:236, 244). Following the demise of the kongsi due to Dutch pressure, secret societies arose to fill the gap left by the kongsi. In the twentieth century context, the kongsi no longer operated, and secret societies became underground activities (same in West Malaysia and Singapore, Freedman 1960; Vaughan 1879), and they will not be discussed here.

The Chinese of Sarawak in the early part of the 20th century were consolidated by three general forces: similarity of dialect, geographic proximity of origin, and clanship. Of these binding forces the most noticeable, according to T'ien, was similarity of dialect. Local settlement patterns and bazaar economy, for example, were apparently organized along dialect lines. Dialect groups are closely associated with territorial groups though not necessarily identical. Generally speaking, though, they are conceptually interchangeable (T'ien 1953:15).

Clanship in Sarawak was referred to as a relationship based on presumed, but not actually traceable, common unilineal descent. It was surname based. Membership included people with the same surname from a confined geographic locality in China, from a same dialect group, or was extended to include anyone who shared the same surname. Such clanship is also referred

to as "Same surname Association" or "Common Surname Association" in the literature. (Watson suggested replacing clans or clanship with common surname associations to avoid confusion of terminology (1982:610).) Like dialect groups, the basic function of the clan was mutual support. New immigrants depended on clansmen as guardians during the initial stage of adjustment and survival.

Clanship apparently is a derived system emerging from the descent ideology which shaped the lineage organization of southeastern Chinese communities. I would further argue that dialect groups and territorial groups may be considered a product of the same descent ideology in addition to the shared sentiment of neighborhood. As lineage organizations in the homeland are largely localized, members of the same lineage share the same dialect and territory. The same argument was raised earlier by Freedman in his discussion of the associations in the 19th century singapore (1960:40-41).

Social bonds in rural southeastern China are bonds of descent and propinquity. These binding forces are evident in Sarawak, both in the rural areas, and the urban centers. The major difference observed between the homeland and the overseas Chinese community in Sarawak is that in the later context, descent ideology is broadened and more inclusive, allowing immigrant Chinese to assert

solidarity with members of the Chinese community whom they would not have acknowledged as kinsmen so readily in the homeland. This broadened descent ideology united overseas immigrant Chinese in many facets of life. It formed the basis of social relations: it acted as an insurance for credits and loans, for business transactions, big and small, and it justified mutual trust and support.

The Chinese in Singapore were studied by Freedman around the same time T'ien did his study in Sarawak. Singapore in the late 1940s was not important in agricultural production. It was more noted as a crossroads for trade and labor transportation. As such, its population was transient in nature, and its economy made it a business center. Although Chinese immigration to Singapore had a long history, the Chinese population studied by Freedman was mainly of first and second generation immigrants. According to Freedman, due to the individualistic nature of immigration, the social structure of Singapore Chinese was more individual-household based.

Freedman reached a similar conclusion as T'ien; the localized descent groups did not transplant themselves to overseas Chinese communities. Beyond the household, Freedman found no true kinship based formal organization. He also pointed out that beyond the

agnatic based household, social relationship with the affinal and maternal kin can be as important as agnatic kin, even though patrilineal bias remained. He suggested that the local kindred was bilateral. It was not a corporate group, and had no leadership and no shared ritual activities.

As in Sarawak, Freedman found "associations" in Singapore, but they were of a much weaker form than those in Sarawak. He was of the opinion that the major structural features of these associations were generally remote from kinship (1960:29), and the binding forces were based on "like origin," i.e., same surname or same territory (1953:93; 1960:65). But Freedman was quick to point out that agnation was implied in the structures. Though the agnation implied was of more general nature than the agnation inherent in the lineage structure of local communities in China, "...just as at home similarity of surname could link lineages together in wider patrilineal groupings, so in Singapore it could bring together men who came from widely separated communities in China" (1960:40-41).

Freedman suggested an evolutionary sequence for the development of the associations, based on the complexity of society. In a small-scale, relatively undeveloped settlement such as Sarawak, associations tend to express social, economic and political links in a

undifferentiated manner. As the scale and complexity of the society increases, as in Singapore, a trade based urban environment, associations tend to become more specialized (1960:83).

In regard to the descent based kinship relations which shaped rural society in China, Freedman stressed that they were not as valued in Singapore. Social, economic, and political forces independent of personal ties may have forced the Chinese to act beyond the narrow notion of kinship ties. Such forces included colonial administration, a western legal system, trade and industry, modern education, and closer contact with non-Chinese in Singapore (1953:87). Similarly, these conditions also threatened the existence of associations which in the past functioned to create social solidarity (1953:98).

Based on the analyses of the Chinese descent ideology and social organization beyond the homeland thus far, we may conclude that as Chinese moved away from their homeland, from Hong Kong, and Taiwan, to move into foreign territories, their descent based lineage organization was not transplanted overseas where social, economic, and political contexts were different. Associations replaced localized descent groups as social institutions in the new land. Associations were not new inventions. They all had traditional roots in China, and

their organizing principles were based on a more generalized patrilineal descent ideology. These derived institutions usually were more inclusive in membership. As social, economic, and political conditions of the host society became more complex, the importance of associations tended to weaken. The family group or household became the only formal descent-based unit. Agnatic ideology remained the organizing principle, but non-agnatic relationships began to gain influence.

Descent Ideology and Social Change

Studies on descent groups in and beyond the homeland lead me to believe that descent ideology as a conceptual system remains the underlying principle of Chinese social organization, even though the social organization has gone through modification in order to adapt to changing contexts. The question of how persistent the descent ideology is remains.

Descent ideology existed in Chinese society with complex civilization. In the homeland, peasant economy, more permanent settlement, and weak government political control at local levels may have encouraged the development and persistence of localized land based lineage organization. In Sarawak and Singapore, two market economy oriented societies, the traditional social organization did not develop, and the expressions of the

descent ideology apparently went through modifications. The descent principle may have been the force behind the associations that replaced the lineage system and organized a wider range of Chinese immigrants not necessarily linked by demonstrable descent. The differences between social organizations in Sarawak and Singapore can be considered as expressions of the descent ideology adjusting to different levels and types of social, economic, and political organizations of the colonies. Evidence from Taiwan reflects yet other types of adaptive expressions to pioneer conditions.

In the homeland, the patrilineal descent ideology found its expressions in the lineage organization. In the overseas context, on a higher level, the descent ideology was generalized to become the organizing principle of social institutions that replaced the lineage in organizing the loosely related Chinese immigrants in a foreign community. On the basic level, the descent ideology found its expression in the only agnatic unit identified, the family group (or the linked households, the _jia_). The question remains whether patrilineal descent ideology still underlies the Chinese social organization today.

This study attempts to investigate the descent ideology in the overseas Chinese community in one _Nanyang_ country, Malaysia. It is hoped that with the

ethnographic data from two Malaysian Chinese communities, we can begin to answer the questions concerning the patrilineal descent ideology in today's Chinese community. Where is the locus of the descent ideology? How is it expressed? How does it organize primary groups? How does it organize the society on a higher level? Does the descent ideology, like the lineage organization, affect, or is it affected by, the social, economic and political context? And, finally, will the descent ideology follow the same course of evolution as the lineage system, and will it soon disappear?

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXTS: MALAYSIA AND ITS CHINESE POPULATION

In order to place the Malaysian Chinese in the proper historical and cultural context, it is essential to understand the politico-economic history of the Malay Peninsula, and the Chinese in Malaysia.

Information on the politico-economic history of Malaysia is drawn primarily from Andaya and Andaya (1982); Gullick and Gale (1986). Information on the politico-economic history of the Chinese in Malaysia is based primarily on Purcell (1948;1965); Sandhu (1961a;1961b;1964); Jackson (1968); FitzGerald (1972); Somers (1974); Lim (1977); Archive Documents (n.d.;1952); Population and Housing Census (1980a;1980b); Mid-term Review of the Fourth Malaysia Plan (1984); Rancangan Malaysia Kelima (1986); MSDC (1986); MCA (1986); PGRM (1986). Unless reference to a particular source is necessary, citations of author and reference will not be made in the following sections.

Political and Economic History of Malaysia

Malaysia consists of two parts, West Malaysia, and East Malaysia. The former is located on the Malay

Peninsula, the latter in northern Borneo (the two states of Sabah and Sarawak). Since most of the Malaysian Chinese population has lived and is now living in West Malaysia, the background information will be limited to the Malay Peninsula alone.

Culturally, Malaysia shares a common regional Malay heritage with that of Sumatra, the Archipelagos, and Java. Through trade, merchants and immigrants, India and China introduced their religions and cultural practices into the Malay world. Beginning in the 13th century, Islam became the dominant religion of the region and tied the Southeast Asian trading world into the trans-Asiatic trade network from Arabia through India to southern China. Politically, the Malay Peninsula had always been the domain of local chiefs and rulers who gained wealth and power by way of control of local resources for trade. These rulers had already developed a tradition of government before the seventh century A.D.

The first recognized political entity representing the rulers of the Malay Peninsula was established around 1400 A.D. The Malaka Sultanate lasted for about 100 years during which trade with Arab lands and China prospered and Islam became the state religion of Malaka. Malaka became the regional trade center in late 15th century.

In 1511, the Portuguese took control of Malaka as its own entrepot for tin and spice trade. By 1515, the Portuguese had seized Goa in India, and Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, along with Malaka and had established a new spice route to Asia around the Cape of Good Hope. Fleeing the Portuguese, the royal house of Malaka sought refuge in the Riau-Lingga archipelagos, then to Kampar in east coast Sumatra, before finally settling in Johore to rule the Johore Kingdom till 1699.

Dutch presence in the Straits began in the 1590s. The British followed and replaced the Dutch in in the Malay Peninsula during the 18th century. Increasing European interest in tin had encouraged local and immigrant miners, mainly the Bugis and the Minangkabau, to extract the mineral. Growing trade with China and Europe in the 18th century encouraged cash crop planting and increasing mining activity for tin and gold. These economic activities attracted a new influx of immigrant populations to the Malay Peninsula. Among them were Indian Muslims, Arab traders, more Minangkabau and Bugis, and Chinese. Through intensive intermarriage and political alliances, the Minangkabau and the Bugis were gradually Malayanized and absorbed into the Malay society. The Chinese were encouraged by local rulers to settle and work, as pepper planters in Trengganu, gambier planters in Riau, gold miners and pepper planters in

Kelantan, tin miners in Selangor and Perak. However, their increasing penetration of occupations formerly dominated by Malays, and their secret society activities became the focus of resentment by both the Malays and the European colonists alike.

As the 19th century advanced, the economy of the Malay Peninsula became closely linked to that of the British economy. Towards the last quarter of the 19th century, several factors encouraged active British participation in Malay politics. Fear of expansion by other European powers, especially Germany, in the region, and maintenance of a favorable environment for trade prompted the British to change its traditional policy of indirect rule by imposing a Resident System in Malaya. By the 1890s, control of the Malay economy had passed to the British, and by 1919, the entire Malay Peninsula was under British rule.

It was during the 19th century that mass immigration from China and India was encouraged. A vast infusion of European capital and management skills promoted rapid economic development of Malaya and the need for a larger labor force. However, this immigration upset the local socio-economic and political organizaion.

Malay rulers' sovereignty was undermined. The separation of secular power from the sacred power of the native rulers created resentment from the royalty,

especially in the unfederated states where Islam had stronger influence. Secondly, the encouragement of immigrant labor had drastically increased the number of non-Malays, Chinese and Indians in particular, altering the ratio of natives to non-natives. In 1931, census revealed that there were more Chinese (1,709,329) than Malays (1,644,173) in British Malaya (Andaya and Andaya 1982:252).

In addition to British legal and administrative systems, The British education system was brought to Malaya. English education was provided for the elite of the society. This benefitted high-birth Malays as well as Chinese and Indians. For the great majority of the commoners and immigrants alike, vernacular education was introduced.

In order to encourage European planters to open up the jungles and invest capital in Malaya, a western style land tenure system replaced Malay customary land rules between 1887 and 1904. The land tenure system allowed land to become a commodity that could be speculated in and transferred for immediate gain. Without a full understanding of the consequences of land transfer, many Malay peasants lost their traditional means of production. This prompted the British to implement the Malay Reservation Act of 1913 which laid the foundation for the legal privileges of the Malays at

the expense of the other ethnic groups.

Ethnic resentment surfaced during the economic depressions, when the immigrant labor force, ventured out from the tin mines into agriculture, the occupation traditionally in the hands of the Malays. The British administration's reforms between 1930 and 1934 allowed more Malays to enter lower level clerical government positions. This brought the Malays in direct competition with the Chinese, Tamils and Indians who traditionally dominated these positions. Anti-Chinese feelings were further encouraged by the Japanese during the Japanese Occupation period between 1942 and 1945 as the Japanese recruited the Malays into paramilitary units to fight Chinese resistance groups. During post-war years, the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) retaliated against Japanese collaborators. The Malays became the prime target. As a response, Malay villagers organized to fight the Chinese, whom they saw as the members and supporters of the MPAJA.

Ethnic conflict was the inevitable outcome of the British colonial economic and education policies. At the dawn of Merdeka (independence), the leading Malay party, UMNO, United Malays National Organization bargained for constitutionalized Malay privileges in exchange for the recognition of citizenship for non-Malays in the new nation, Malaysia.

Malaysia gained independence in 1957. With the British gone, ethnic groups fought to obtain equal shares in politics and the economy. But there was never mutual trust that the sharing would be equitable. The Malays attempted to capture a larger share of the economy through political dominance while the Chinese and Indians tried to maintain ethnic harmony through accommodation. Among other issues, the sensitive questions of citizenship, education and special privileges have always created uncomfortable feelings. The Ethnic Disturbance on May 13 of 1969 was an expression of this distrust, prompted by the success of the Chinese opposition parties in the 1969 National Election. In 1971, the Dewan Rayat (House of Representatives) passed constitutional amendments which considered seditious "any public discussion, even by Parliament members, of topics dealing with the power and status of the Malay rulers, Malay special privileges, citizenship, Malay as the National language and the status of Islam as the official religion..." The amendments also reserved a quota of places within institutions of higher learning for Malays as one means of redressing the ethnic imbalance in the professions. (Andaya and Andaya 1982:291-292)

Since 1966 the Malay-dominated ruling government has drawn up long term economic plans. The two principle objectives of these economic plans to be achieved by 1990

are: to eradicate poverty among all Malaysians irrespective of race, and to restructure Malaysian society so that the identification of race with economic function and geographical location is reduced and eventually eliminated (Mid-Term Review of the Fourth Malaysia Plan 1984:11). It was hoped that through government credits and loans, land development programs, training and public amenities, the first objective could be achieved. The second objective could be achieved through the participation of Malays in modern sectors of economy. It was hoped that sustained economic growth would lead to the success of this goal. However, it soon became obvious to the non-Malays that without sustained growth, redistribution of existing resources and high unemployment of the non-Malay population will be inevitable.

As a consequence of differential treatment among the component ethnic groups of the country, ethnic distrust continues. The Chinese generally see the government's attempts to assist the Malays as a way to obtain a bigger share of the economy at the expense of the Chinese. As such, a more urgent sense of competition among the peoples for educational opportunities, employment, credit and investment prevails in Malaysian society.

Malaysian economy up to the 1980s had depended primarily on the export of primary commodities: oil, rubber, tin, timber and palm oil in this order. Together, they accounted for 73.3% of total export earning. Manufacturing took up about 19%. To offset total dependency on primary commodities, in the Third Malaysian Plan (1976-1980), rural industrialization was introduced to encourage manufacturing industries to disperse into the countryside, especially in economically depressed areas. As a result of this and other development policies, the export of primary commodities dropped to 63.2%, manufacturing up to 32.1% of total export income in 1985 (Economic Planning Unit Malaysia 1986:60).

The above broad historical perspective sets the context within which the Chinese Malaysians have been making adjustments in order to survive and maintain a foothold. The following is a brief historical account of the socio-economic life of the Chinese immigrants as early pioneers in the generally hostile environment.

Socio-Economic Life of Immigrant Chinese in the Malay Peninsula

Chinese contact with the Malay Peninsula began long before the colonial expansion in Southeast Asia. The early Chinese in the Peninsula were port city traders who came in Chinese junks with the northeastern monsoon

wind to trade Chinese silk and porcelain for local jungle and marine products. Chinese settlements were not recorded in literature until the 17th century in Malacca. The settlers were mainly the descendants of Chinese traders and local women, often non-Muslim Batak or Balinese women. Some of these "Baba" (Straits born Chinese) later became the financiers of plantation economy in the early 20th century. In the late 17th century, Chinese immigrants were attracted to Malaya by the hard but profitable gold and tin mining on the western coast of the Peninsula. They worked for individual Malay local rulers but maintained a high degree of autonomy.

High demand for tin from the European industrial countries in the late 18th century attracted the first influx of massive immigration of mining laborers from China, and tin mining became a Chinese monopoly. Chinese immigration to Malaya reached its peak during the British colonial time in the later half of the 19th century. The British, in order to obtain labor to work the rapidly expanding tin mining industry and the plantations, encouraged the immigration of Chinese labor. In China, on the other hand, population pressure, an unstable political situation, the loosening of emigration law for males, and the prospect of making a fortune pushed unskilled peasants to the Nanyang (the South Seas). Most

male immigrants never planned to settle down in foreign lands. Their goal was to get rich and bring the wealth home.

One notable Chinese social organization these immigrants brought along into the mining communities was the secret society. The internal conflicts of these societies became the catalyst of British intervention in Malayan politics in the late 19th century. By then, two classes of Chinese immigrants had emerged in Malaya; the urban merchant-financiers in Penang, Singapore and Malacca, and the laborers stationed wherever opportunities of employment were.

The end of the 19th century saw the expansion of export-oriented plantation agriculture in the Malay Peninsula. A fresh influx of Chinese immigrant laborers rushed to the Malay Peninsula to work on plantations in Singapore, Johore, Malacca and Perak. Before the introduction of rubber in the first decade of the 20th century, plantation economy was largely speculative in nature. Plantation crops shifted from the initial tapioca, gambier and pepper to coffee and sugar following the price and demand of the European market. This same speculative attitude was observed in the immigrant laborers as well. The earlier influx of male immigrant labor of the late 19th century corresponded to the European demand for tin plates, the invention of

steamships, and the opening of the Suez Canal, while the later influx of the early 20th century coincided with the demand for natural rubber as a result of the expansion of the auto industry in the U.S.

Immigrant laborers were usually recruited by Chinese recruiters following a credit-ticket system. The earlier immigrants were packed in 300-ton junks which took 30 days to get to Malaya. Later, steamships improved the ordeal, but the journey was still described as the "pig trade." The Sinkeh (new comers) who survived the ordeal of the journey would be sorted in Singapore and sold to interested buyers or middlemen. The Sinkeh had to work to pay back the "ticket" pre-arranged by the recruiter, and whatever amount he owed through credit to the owner. In order to keep the laborers, owners often provided the laborers credits for subsistence, gambling debts and opium to such an extent that payment for the return trip home became impossible.

This same credit system existed in the business domain where large importers lent credits to middlemen who in turn lent credits to shopkeepers who then gave credits to consumers, Chinese and Malay alike. This credit system is an adaptation to the lack of ready credits and loans from public sources. It also serves to tie the debtor to the creditor on the basic idea of reciprocity common in traditional societies. It

functions well when most people concerned play their expected role in the credit-debt network. During bad times, however, the system is subject to abuse when one link vanishes or claims bankruptcy under the western oriented legal system. (Descriptions see T'ien 1953; Freedman 1959.)

The early Chinese immigrants had no rights, either political or social. While their presence had been regarded by the colonial government as an index of economic growth (Andaya and Andaya 1982:176), the British administration considered these Chinese as a transient population, who eventually would leave and go back to their home country. As long as they maintained law and order, there would be no interference from the British. The exception would be when labor became overabundant during times of economic depression. The chinese laborers would then be repatriated. But as long as labor was in demand, immigration would be encouraged. The immigrants' home country, China, had no regard for these workers. In fact, the Manchu government considered them as criminals subject to sever penalties if they returned home. FitzGerald suggested that under such circumstances, the Chinese immigrants developed a psychology which influenced their behavior and development in the <u>Nanyang</u>. He described it as:

> ...The Chinese must rely on themselves, trust to the impartiality, or the tolerance of governments over which they exercised no direct influence at all, were

> indeed remote across distant seas, and could only be moved by the manifest economic advantage of employing Chinese and profiting from their skills and enterprise. This situation put a very strong emphasis on the value of material prosperity, and devalued all other forms of activity, including intellectual pursuits (1972:152).

The Chinese also kept strong kinship ties under these circumstances. Kin groups formed the only security the immigrants could rely on. Kinship ties extended to include immigrants from the same native village in China, of the same dialect group, of the same surname, and later extended to include immigrants residing in the same community. This latter extension of kinship is most evident in the New Villages into which many Chinese were forced to resettle during the Emergency period between 1948 and 1960. The Chinese traditional belief system served a similar function but on a more personal basis. As the Chinese received no protection from any political sources, they turned to their forefather's gods and their ancestors. These mechanisms have been described by Gullick as "inward-looking defensive solidarity" (1986:248). Gullick suggested that the same mechanisms may have served to detach the Chinese from the larger society outside.

In the 1920s, due to world depression, prices of primary commodities fell so low that unemployment in the tin mines and rubber plantations forced the repatriation of laborers. Those who did not leave moved to unoccupied

land on the fringe of jungles to temporarily derive a living from the land. In general, partly due to their preference for short term labor for quick returns and for commercial activities, and partly due to British discouragement and legal restrictions limiting non-Malays from owning land, few Chinese opted for agriculture as an occupation. In fact many of these squatters went back to mines and plantations as soon as employment in the mines and plantations became available. During the Depression of the 1930s and the Japanese Occupation of Malaya between 1942 and 1945, this outward movement of unemployed laborers accelerated further. As a consequence, by 1945, an estimated 300,000 Chinese immigrants were engaged in agriculture (Lim 1979:202). Some of these squatters began to engage in commercial vegetable gardening and pig rearing for market consumption. Somers remarked that "Even as an agriculturalist, the overseas Chinese was a businessman" (1947:18).

Before the 20th century, immigrants from China were almost all male because the Chinese government forbade the emigration of females. The prohibition was lifted in 1893 (Somers 1974:38). But the female to male ratio among the Chinese immigrants in 1931 was still 486 per 1000 male for Malaya as a whole (Sandhu 1961a:17; Purcell 1965:223). The 1933 Aliens Ordinance in British

Malaya introduced a quota to regulate the admission of aliens. This set the limit to male immigrants but females were not affected until 1938. Partly due to the relaxation of emigration laws in China, partly due to the decline of the silk industry in Canton, between 1934 and 1938, 190,000 women entered Malaya from China (Sandhu 1961a:17), most of them later married and settled. Following the Depression, the Japanese Occupation, and the establishment of the Communist government in China, Chinese immigration to Malaya came to an end, and the immigrant population became stabilized. This stabilized population and the offspring of these pioneer immigrants form the population of today's Malaysian Chinese community.

Chinese Squatters and the New Villages

As mentioned earlier, farming/squatting was a form of adaptation to unemployment during the economic depressions of World War I and of the 1930s. As the economy improved, the drift reverted from the jungle edges or urban fringes back to estates, tin mines and urban centers. In British Malaya, all unalienated land was vested in the Malay rulers and land titles were granted only on the authority of the Ruler in Council. Furthermore, much of the land was Malay Reserve which could be assigned to Malays only, and could not be

subsequently transferred to non-Malays. The Chinese turned to squatting since they were unable, or in some cases unwilling, to occupy the land legally.

It is not known how many people became squatters. One estimate stated that in 1940 there were about 150,000 Chinese squatters in the Malay Peninsula. But in 1945 the figure inflated to 400,000 (Robinson 1956:76 cited in Sandhu 1964:157), or about 15% of the total Chinese population. This increase was caused by the Japanese Occupation of Malaya from 1942 to 1945. Shortage of food forced many urban dwellers to move to the urban fringe to subsist on the land. The collapse of the rubber industry during the same period caused a general exodus from the rubber areas into the countryside. This outward dispersion was encouraged further by the Japanese as a means to increase food production. After the Occupation, tin and estates became engaged in production again and drew many surviving Chinese squatters back to wage labor. Other squatters, especially those on the skirt of urban centers, remained in the rural areas and began commercial food production to supply the markets in urban centers. In 1948, the estimated number of squatters was more than 300,000 (Sandhu 1964:159), or 11% of all Chinese in Malaya.

Occupationwise, the squatters were diversified, ranging from full-time cultivators, part-time cultivator-

wage labor, wage labor, to shopkeeping. Each household could have several people engaged in a variety of occupations. The growing prosperity of this gradually settling immigrant population was short lived. With the growing conflicts between the Malays and the Chinese resulting from the mounting communist insurgency, the squatter population began to pose a threat to the political stability of British Malaya. To protect its own overseas interest, the British mounted a military campaign against the communist insurgency in Malaya. Between 1950 and 1952, the British transferred 605,028 rural people into relocation settlements. Some 624 settlements were created, of which 480 were "New Villages", so called to designate the place where squatters and others were resettled.

This resettlement scheme is the basic strategy of the Brigg's Plan to end the Emergency. It was designed to cut off food and other commodity supplies to the "people inside [the jungle]" by the sympathetic Chinese squatter population, as well as to protect the rural dispersed population from the harassment of the Malayan Races Liberation Army. In order to achieve these goals, the rural population was reorganized through two processes: relocation and regroupment. Relocation means the transfar of the dispersed rural population, squatters and non-squatters, to pre-selected sites that were

fortified with barbed wire and curfew gates. These sites were usually along main roads for easy control and administration. Abandonment of holdings, crops and livestock were often involved (Han 1956). As such, change of occupation of the resettled population was entailed in many cases. All together, 573,000 persons were relocated into 480 such New Villages, primarily in the more populous tin and rubber states of Johore and Perak. Regroupment involved the relocation of dispersed mine and estate laborers and their families to some fortified point of concentration on the property of the employer or close to it. 25,344 persons were regrouped, most of them Indian immigrants. 6,767 isolated Malays and orang asli (aboriginal peoples) were also regrouped into settlements (Sandhu 1964:164). The Brigg's Plan affected about 10% of the Malayan total population. 86% of these affected were Chinese. All together, 20% of the Malayan Chinese were relocated.

The resettlement plan led to the eventual defeat of the insurgents in 1960. But the social consequences it brought were immense. First, it changed the settlement pattern of Malaya permanently. The majority of the settlers remained where they were forced to settle even though the British administration's prediction was otherwise (Corry 1954). The addition of urban centers (defined in Malaya as centers of more than 1,000 people)

created by the resettlement scheme increased urban population from 26.5% of 1947 to 42.5% of 1957, making Malaya the second most urbanized country in Asia (Population Census 1957).

For the Chinese immigrants, resettlement brought people of varied dialect groups and family groups to a common community, which disrupted the formation of dialect aggregate, an adaptive trend early immigrants established in unfamiliar new social settings overseas. Lack of space for household expansion, and shortage of land and employment opportunities forced the younger generation to leave their natal family to seek better fortune elsewhere, a trend not unfamiliar to their forefathers. For the Malayan society as a whole, resettlement further divided the people along communal lines. As 86% of those relocated into New Villages were Chinese, they were forced to form Chinese settlements which reinforced an "inward-looking defensive solidarity" and further isolated the Chinese from the wider world. The infrastructure and basic amenities essential for the fortification of New Villages, eg., electricity, health clinics, schools, which were not yet available in most Malay rural _kampong_ (village) until much later, stirred jealousy in the Malay community. This led to the exclusion of all New Villages in the rural development programs of the post-independence economic planning.

Prior to the resettlement, the Chinese immigrants were involved in four categories of occupation: farmers engaged in food production and pig rearing, entrepreneurs engaged in tin mining, rubber growing or other crop production; wage labor working on tin mines and rubber plantations, and shopkeepers. According to Sandhu (1964), 60% of the total population belonged to the first two categories before the resettlement. Resettlement forced the removal of agricultural producers and wage laborers from their means of production and located them elsewhere, usually some distance from their original location. Though agricultural land compensation was attempted, the locations were often unsuited for agriculture or too small to support the household. Curfew restrictions further reduced the efficiency of production. Little was recorded concerning the economic life of these settlers. Corry's report stated minimal unemployment and underemployment in the Federation of Malaya in general (1954:12). Others suggested a shifted profile of occupation. Sandhu reported a 33% drop in agriculture, from 60% to 27% in 1952 while wage-earners increased from 25% to 52%. The immediate effect of this shift was evidenced in the reduction of the acreage under food crop production, the reduction of exports of fresh vegetables and pigs to Singapore, and the increase in the import of

fresh vegetables (Sandhu 1964:179). Nyce arrived at a similar conclusion, using information from a 1954 government report (1973:9-15).

New Villages in the State of Malacca

The Chinese population in this study are residents of New Villages in the state of Malacca. Malacca is a state with a relatively small number of New Villages. Corry's report gave 17 New Villages with a population of 9,555 in 1954 (calculated from Appendix A, 1954:43). There were also nine regrouped areas involving 1,046 persons (Sandhu 1964:170).

Throughout the colonial period, the fluctuation in the number of Chinese immigrants in Malacca corresponded to the trend of economic activities. The main influx of Chinese immigrants to Malacca occurred in the first half of the 19th century, for gold and tin mining. By 1860, mining in Malacca had changed from an exclusively Malay monopoly to become largely a Chinese undertaking (Sandhu 1961a:11). When tin and gold were exhausted, commercial agriculture expanded rapidly, especially in the second half of the 19th century, and with it the influx of Chinese cultivators to Malacca. The new crops planted by the Chinese in Malacca included cotton, cinnamon, nutmeg, tapioca, pepper, gambier and rubber with the last four the most important (Jackson

1968). Tapioca was planted mainly prior to 1886. Gambier and pepper intercropping reached its peak in 1911. Following the fall of demand for gambier in Europe, and with the success in rubber planting in Malacca came the an influx of Chinese cultivators and laborers. After 1905, south Indian immigrant labor joined the labor market in Malacca.

Before the early 1900s, the Chinese were mainly congregated within or close to the city of Malacca. Cash crop planting brought the Chinese out of the city to where their economic activities were centered. But population density was still the highest in the city of Malacca. As the number of Chinese in the city center grew, more Chinese settled on the outskirts of the urban center to produce vegetables, fruits, poultry and pigs for the markets in the city. Further Chinese settlements spread to smaller urban centers and along communication lines. By 1938, Chinese became "ubiquitous" throughout the state (Sandhu 1961a:18).

Japanese Occupation disrupted the population distribution drastically. Food shortage, inflation, and political persecutions drove large numbers of Chinese out of the urban centers to squat on vacant land to produce subsistence. The collapse of the rubber industry forced another exodus of Chinese laborers from the rubber areas to rural unoccupied land. The Post Occupation era

witnessed the movement of Chinese back to the urban centers, and later the resettlement of nearly 10,000 squatters into 17 New Villages for security reasons. In 1947, the Chinese population in the state of Malacca was 40% of the total population. The resettlement probably involved 7-9% of the total Chinese population in the state.

Records of the economic life of the resettled Chinese population in Malacca are scarce. One census investigation conducted in Lendu New Village in 1952 reveals that of the gainfully employed villagers, 49% were farmers, 9% rubber tappers and 32% were employed in an unspecified "others" category as compared with 88% farmers, 2.7% rubber tappers and 10% others before the resettlement. The significant decrease in farming was due to the distance from the New Village to their previously occupied farms (Pertanian AOM Malaka, Report on Agricultural Survey on Lundu New Village, n.d.). Another survey of Tiang Dua New Village in 1952 recorded that 36% of the families were engaged in general farming, 58% as landless laborers, 6% as shopkeepers and rubber small holders (Pertanian AOM Malaka 111/52, 1952). Sandhu derived the following occupational profile for New Villages in Malacca, based on his 1952 survey data: 35% in agriculture, 37% in rubber tapping, 0.4% in tin mining, 9.6% in shopkeeping (1964:179). Nyce cited a

1954 government report that in Malacca New Villages, 38.5% were engaged in farming, 44.5% in rubber tapping, 10% in business, 17% in "others" including shopkeeping (1973:9-15).

Regardless of the different nature of these reports, results do conform with observations from national level data summarized earlier in this chapter. A generalization can be made regarding the conditions of New Village settlements.

1. Resettlement required the removal of land based squatter farmers from their previous illegal holdings to concentrate in circumscribed urban style New Village settings where crowding allowed no space for further expansion and little room for a kitchen garden.
2. Arable land surrounding the village, if available, was not sufficient for all villagers to make a living. As a result, wage employment in the rubber plantations became an alternative.

These observations coincide with analysis of the New Villages elsewhere (Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia 1986:44). Scarcity of data prohibits one from making further generalizations about the economic activities of the villagers in the formative stage of the New Village. But it seems safe to speculate that diversification of employment did occur, with a general trend moving from subsistence and commercial farming to wage economy

following the formation of the New Villages.

Most of these New Villages have survived till today, even after the fences have come down. Due to the restrictions imposed on the acquisition of land by non-Malays, a further moving away from land, and diversification of employment have been witnessed in the years following 1960, the end of Emergency.

Thirty years after the Brigg's Plan, New Villages have become a permanent sight on the Malaysian landscape. Today, about 10% of the total population of West Malaysia lives in the New Villages, 85% of which are Chinese. Of the West Malaysian Chinese population, 1/3 live in the New villages (MCA 1986:6; Parti Gerakan 1986:53-54). In the state of Malacca, according to the 1980 census, about 3.78% of Malacca's population, and about 10% of the Malacca Chinese population live in New Villages.

When New Villages were first established in 1950-1952, each family was allotted 5000 to 7000 sq. ft for the house lot and a temporary title for the land. Over the past 30 years, population growth was coupled with lack of economic opportunitie in the surrounding areas. In addition, the government economic plans paid negligible attention to the improvement and maintenance of infrastructures in the New Villages. This has resulted in socio-economic problems in the New Villages

and political discontent among the residents. Overcrowded living spaces, unemployment and underemployment, net out-migration, low income level and poverty are some of the issues raised by the residents and sympathizers.

During the 1986 election year, politicians took the opportunity to raise the issue of government disregard towards the New Villages, keeping them out of the mainstream of national development (MCA 1986; Parti Gerakan 1986:40-52). 1986 was also the year when New Villages came to face the expiration of their temporary land title. Most villagers received a 30 years temporary lease from the government at the time the New Villages were formed. As the leases approached their expiration date, an sense of insecurity was mounting.

It was during this period of local discontent and insecurity that I conducted the village study in two New Villages in Malacca.

CHAPTER IV

CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN RURAL MALAYSIA

The history of Chinese immigration to Malacca, and the formation of the New Villages have been described in the previous chapter. In this chapter, discussion will focus on the relations between the Chinese communities and wider society, and the variations within the communities.

Chinese Population in Malacca

To place the Chinese population in Malaysia and in Malacca in perspective, some aggregate data are presented below. Based on 1986 Malaysian government publication, 32.8% of the total population in West Malaysia is Chinese, of which 59.2% are urban, 40.8% are rural (Derived from RMK Jadual 4-1, 4-3, 1986:149, 154). In the state of Malacca, 38% of the total population are Chinese, of which 43.4% are urban, 56.6% are rural (Derived from 1980 Census). Details see Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Population of West Malaysia

	Total Pop.	Malays	Chinese	Indian	Others	
	12,968.8	7,325.6	4,248.4	1,311.9	82.9	
%	100.0%	56.5%	32.8%	10.1%	0.6%	%row
Urban	100.0%	41.4%	47.2%	10.7%	0.8%	%row
Rural	100.0%	67.1%	22.7%	9.7%	0.5%	%row
Urban	41.1%	30.1%	59.2%	43.5%	52.8%	%column
Rural	58.9%	69.9%	40.8%	56.5%	47.2%	%column

(Source: derived from RMK, Jadual 4-1,4-3, 1986:149;154)

Table 2: Population of Malacca State

	Total Pop.	Malays	Chinese	Indian	Others	
	441,895	237,129	168,635	32,994	3,137	
%	100.00%	53.66%	38.16%	7.47%	0.71%	%row
Urban	100.00%	20.90%	70.65%	6.25%	2.20%	%row
Rural	100.00%	63.69%	28.22%	7.84%	0.25%	%row
Urban	23.43%	9.1%	43.4%	19.6%	72.9%	%column
Rural	76.57%	90.9%	56.6%	80.4%	27.1%	%column

(Source: State Population Report: Malaka, 1980
Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, pp.41-41)

The ethnic composition of the state reflects that of West Malaysia, but most of the population resides in rural areas. Malacca is not one of the more developed states of Malaysia, despite its historical significance. Malacca is demographically notable in two aspects. It has the second highest population density in the country, an average of 632 persons per sq. mile, as compared with the national average of 67 persons per sq. miles (MSDC 1986:8). In addition, Malacca has the highest net out-migration rate of -23.1 per cent, as reported in the 1980 census (General Report of the Population Census 1980:65).

Rural Industrialization and the Industrial Estates

In its effort to stimulate growth and redistribute economic opportunities and wealth, the Malaysian government introduced the regional industrialization policy under the Third Malaysia Plan, between 1975 and 1980. The essence of the plan is to de-emphasize industrial development in the metropolitan centers and emphasize the growth of intermediate urban centers. A third group of towns has been designated as centers of resource processing activity (Chan and Kruger 1980:3-4). At the same time, the regional industrialization policy package encourages the development of industrial estates, particularly in the less developed regions. Incentives such as income tax relief, labor utilization relief, and industry promoting institutions such as MIDF (Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Ltd.), FIDA and its later form MIDA (Malaysian Industrial Development Authority) were set up to coordinate and facilitate industrial growth (Spinanger 1986:67-68). In Malacca alone, between 1972 and 1974, seven industrial estates were established. The size of these estates extended from 250 acres in 1972 to 850 acres in 1981 (Spinanger 1986:46, 55). According to MSDC figures, by the end of February 1986, 87% of the proposed industrial land acreage, or 553.37 acres had been developed for industrial estates (MSDC unpublished data).

Of the seven industrial estates, five are located in the Central District of the state of Malacca. One of the study sites is adjacent to the second largest (in terms of acreage and work force requirement) industrial estate, Industrial Estate Ayer Keroh (AK). The other study site is located next to the smallest industrial estate, Industrial Estate Bukit Rambai (BR). A brief description of these two industrial estates is given in table three.

Table 3: Description of Two Industrial Estates

I.E.	Population w/i 3-mile radius	acreage	workforce	type industry
A.K.	31,426	213.19	2560 (m) 2559 (f)	food processing; machine assembly; machine parts; plastics;textiles; packaging materials; feed mills; workshops.
B.R.	25,745	72.36	317 (m) 158 (f)	wood processing; metal containers; furniture; kiln.

(Adapted from MSDC. n.d.:24,29,44-46,47-48)

A.K. Industrial Estate began in 1972. In addition to the industrial estate itself, a housing estate of about 1200 units was built opposite the industrial estate. The construction of the housing estate in the past had drawn labor, both skilled and unskilled of both sexes, from the surrounding towns and villages. Many of the women now in their 20s to 30s

reported having worked as construction workers five to ten years ago before they were married.

B.R. Industrial Estate began in 1974. As at A.K., infrastructures were developed to facilitate and attract industries to invest in the industrial estate. But at B.R., no housing estate was developed as part of the industrial estate plan.

The economic base of the areas surrounding A.K. Industrial Estate and B.R. Industrial Estate is primarily agriculture. Rubber plantation and vegetable farming had been the major occupations of the local residents prior to the introduction of industry related wage jobs. Today, good paved roads and hourly buses link the surrounding villages and towns to the city of Malacca about eight miles away. In fact, the study sites adjacent to the A.K. and B.R. Industrial Estates have never been isolated rural communities due to the nature of Malaysian settlements in general. According to Lim, the locations of settlements in Malaysia have always been along water or roads (1978). The New Villages in particular were established along transportation routes or were attached to existing settlements (Sandhu 1964). The study sites will be called Huang Jia Shan, and Nan Mei.

Three Chinese Communities in the State of Malacca

Huang Jia Shan, and Nan Mei are New Villages, Chinese settlements consolidated during the Emergency in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Most of the residents claim to have been forced to move to the present locations from scattered farms and plantations around the present New Villages. Nan Mei New Village residents were originally vegetable farmers farming to the southwest. They were relocated to an area to the north of an existing small market center which consisted of two rows of about ten atap-roofed (roofing material made of palm leaves) shop houses each, along the main road. Most of Huang Jia Shan residents were originally rubber tappers and vegetable farmers from the surrounding areas.

Today, Huang Jia Shan, and Nan Mei New Villages are concentrated centers of Chinese among rural Malay kampong (village). One of the main differences between the Chinese villages and the Malay kampong is in the population density per land area. As Chinese New Villages are resettlements located on confined land areas with no space for further expansion, natural population increase over the past 30 to 40 years has resulted in overcrowding and out migration from the New Villages. Out migration is also evident in the Malay kampong but the causes of such mobility may be different. The traditional Malay kampong tends to be more dispersed and

almost all families live on land owned by the residents. Expansion of housing units on kampong land is possible to accommodate population growth.

Because of the population density of these New Villages, outsiders often view New Villages as Chinese "towns" located in rural areas. In fact, New Villages are far from self sufficient entities. Almost all rural New Villages depend on larger urban centers for commodities and information. Residents refer to themselves as "people living in the Shan-Ba" (underdeveloped rural areas where the rubber plantations are situated). (Also see T'ien 1953:20 for a brief account.) They consider themselves as less sophisticated but more sincere than the people living in cities and towns. They describe a trip to the city of Malacca as "going to town." Amenity and facility-wise, New Villages in Malacca still lag far behind urban areas. Recent incorporation of settlements within a seven-mile radius of the city of Malacca caused great concern among villagers in the study sites. Residents do not see any advantage to this move. They believe that utilities, property taxes and other licence fees would be inflated. In this study, I will use the term villager and rural community to describe the subjects and their environment, to distinguish them from the town folks whose life and social organization have been shaped by different social, economic and political environments.

Nan Mei

Nan Mei is the site I am most familiar with. As one approaches the village by bus from the city of Malacca, appearing under the bright tropical sun are two rows of low lying old wooden houses with atap or zinc roofs. Grayish black is the dominant color of the buildings in the area. Of the 31 link-roofed houses that line the main street, there are 20 small country style shops, serving the local communities in and around the vicinity. The main street is paved. There are always cars and motorcycles parked along the main street, making the already narrcw street even narrower. People walk around with simple casual clothes. Men usually wear shorts and a singlet or a casual shirt; women have polyester pants and blouses of the same floral pattern. Younger women wear skirts or shorts. Children are mostly clad in school uniforms. Even the owners of the largest local shops do not dress differently than other members of the community.

This part of the community is called the pekan in Malay, and the jie chang in Chinese. Literally, it means the main street or the market area. According to older residents, pekan Nan Mei grew out of a small service center on the outskirts of rubber and coconut plantations and vegetable farms. The keepers of the shops have always been Chinese who either own the shop or

rent the shop lot from local Malay owners. In 1986, one third of the shop keepers claimed to be operating on rented Malay properties.

Like any other rural service centers, pekan Nan Mei began with grocery shops, herbal medicine stores, barber shops and bicycle repair shops. One grocery shop owner told the story about his father riding a horse buggy on yellow mud roads to bring in supplies from the city of Malacca to sell to local residents some fifty years ago. Today, grocery shops still are prominent scenes along the main street, but now delivery vans come periodically to bring fresh supplies to the shops. The grocery shop shelves are crowded with daily necessities ranging from perishable goods, kitchen utensils, toiletry, sanitary items to building materials. Efficient space utilization takes precedence over attractive window decor. In comparison with descriptions of market centers forty years ago in Sarawak (T'ien 1953), and that of ten years ago in Perak (Strauch 1975; 1981), there seems to be little change, at least on a superficial level.

Local residents said it is mutual trust and convenience of credit arrangements that win continuous patronage at the local stores. Grocers acknowledged that no competition exists along the main street, as each grocer has a stable number of patrons. As long as the

basic trust remains, no "gimmicks" (advertising, sales, coupons) are necessary to retain customers or to win over new customers. Today, on the main street, there are 20 shops and three make-shift vegetable and meat vending stalls, as summarized below.

coffee shops	6
grocery/sundry shops	4
grocery cum medicine	2
grocery cum rubber collection	2
motor repair shops	3
tailor shops	2
hair dresser	1
make-shift stalls	3

Although the development in the nearby industrial estates is supposed to create jobs and bring in economic growth to the communities surrounding the estates, very few residents actually work at the factories. Of 160 income earning community members, only 11, or 6.9% are factory workers. Neither is improvement in business apparent to the villagers. The only exception seems to be the coffee shops. Some industrial workers eat at the _pekan_ coffee shops. However, _pekan_ shop keepers do not view this as a sign of exciting prospects.

Like the grocers, coffee shops serve a steady flow of regular customers. The phenomenon of "coffee shop fellowship" described by Nyce is still apparent here (Nyce 1973). Coffee shops serve not only coffee. They are friendly eating stores where people stop by to have meals and snacks at any time of the day. They are more a

social club for male members of the community to exchange business information and gossip. Being female, I was unable to set foot in the coffee shops without being stared at. The few times I braved the shops for a meal or a cup of copi o ice (sweetened local coffee with ice but without condensed milk) probably caused the shop owner momentary loss in business. Female community members do go to the coffee shop, but they buy food "to go," or da bao (pack food in a plastic wrapper to take home to eat) as the local people would say. Though shop owners do not acknowledge competition and the use of gimmicks, people do talk about one coffee shop showing video tapes in the early afternoon to attract or retain customers. Local residents still talk about an elderly man from Sa Le, a community about one mile away, coming to the coffee shop rain or shine on his bicycle until he died a year ago.

To the north of the pekan, behind the shop houses is the New Village per se. Pekan residents recalled that during the Emergency, the government bought a coconut plantation from the local Malays to be designated as the New Village site. The plantation was subdivided into house lots and squatter vegetable farmers from surrounding areas were relocated to this area. The pekan headman said that a barbed wire fence was put up to encircle the New Village and main street houses and

shops. The Emergency experience gave both the old and the new residents of the New Village a sense of solidarity. Although over the thirty to forty years, some houses have changed hands, there is little sense of social differentiation among the residents. When asked, local residents in the New Village and the pekan laughed at the anthropologist's naive distinction of people's wealth by occupation, and the notion that people could be divided into those who exploit (i.e., the business sector) and those who are being exploited. How do the local people see the small macrocosm then? "Dou shi ziji ren (All are our own people)." "People at the jie chang are not wealthier, they only work harder."

Even though a patron-client business relationship seemed to exist at first sight, further analysis shows that because Nan Mei is an open community, a community that is neither self sufficient, nor isolated from the wider society, internal competition and stratification have not gained power over traditional reciprocal relationship.

Most of the New Village residents are not engaged in agriculture any more. Service jobs, middlemen trading, and wage jobs are the main occupations of most working persons.

There are 21 houses in the New Village. The houses have brick lower walls with a wooden upper frame

and a zinc roof. Unlike houses in the pekan, New Village houses are humble but neat individual constructions. Light blue seems to be the preferred color for the exterior and brick red the common color for roofing. Each house is surrounded by a small garden plot where fruit trees, chickens, ducks, and dogs make up the common scene. With the exception of a few houses that still have atap roofs, most houses have been rebuilt since the 1960s. Running water has replaced well water in the past ten years though many families retain the original well in the inner courtyard inside the house. My host family at Nan Mei considered the water well as having a spirit-like quality. Since it served the family well in the past, it should not be filled with debris from the reconstruction of the house and be forgotten, and it should never be used to collect sewage when constructing a modern latrine, as some villages have done. Such behavior, as Lan Gu, the 45 year-old mother of the family insisted, would invite health hazards among the family members.

The New Village looks aesthetically more pleasing than the houses on the main street. Are the New Villagers more aesthetic while the main street residents more practical? I was told that it has to do with the property tax. Because of the higher property tax imposed on buildings designated as business lots along the main

street, pekan residents intentionally maintain the old structure to avoid paying higher fees required of more modern constructions in the business areas. People in the community know what they are doing.

At the first sight, a sense of leisure prevailed at Nan Mei. This soon was proved deceptive. Both men and women work hard. School age children go to school from seven o'clock till one o'clock, while older folks care for the young at home. In contrast to life in the U.S., people here tend to work longer hours at a slower pace. There are fewer material goods to be desired, but parents expect more obdience from the children and impose more obligations on the young.

The Hainanese must have come to this village first. About two hundred meters from the main street, there is a small shrine which houses the Po Wei Sheng Niang (the holy mother of the South Seas), the patron goddess of the Hainanese. According to the inscriptions on the left wall in the shrine, the Hainanese brought the goddess to this "barbarian country" in the hope that the goddess will protect the land and the devotees, and bring prosperity to all businesses.

Regardless of increasing western influence through mass media and education, tradition prevails. Tradition is symbolized by the altar in almost every house, including Catholic homes. Against the center wall

of the front room facing the main door is an altar for the gods or goddesses of the house, be it the heavenly emperor, the goddess of mercy, or the virgin Mary. The ancestors' place is to the left of the center altar. The altar of the god of earth, or Tu Di is under the altar on the floor. Inside each kitchen there is the Zao Jun (kitchen god). Outside the front door on the wall is the place of the Tian Gong (god of heaven). Freedman's description of the Chinese families in Singapore of the 1940s and 1950s is still valid for the Chinese here forty years later.

It is said that as there is order on the altar, there is order in the house. Though time has changed many things, as most villagers would acknowledge, sex and age still are the defining criteria of human relations inside and outside the jia group. One wonders why such order still prevails in a Chinese community.

(DIAGRAM 1a)

Huang Jia Shan

Huang Jia Shan literally means the mountain of the house of Huang. But it is not and has never been a lineage based village. Most of the residents are Hakka speakers. A fair number of Hokkien live here and are fully integrated with the Hakka speakers.

Like Nan Mei, Huang Jia Shan is about 8 miles away from the city of Malacca along the bus route. It.

too, has an Industrial Estate in its vicinity. Older residents recalled Juang Jia Shan being a "Japanese Village" in the 1940s when the Japanese occupied Malaya. The Japanese army opened up 400 acres of jungle and encouraged anyone who was willing to farm to come to the area. This was a measure to increase food production to feed the Japanese soldiers in Malaya. Willing farmers working for the Japanese were rewarded with rice, sugar, cloth and other daily essentials, scarce commodities in war time Malaya. A lot of people were attracted to the Japanese Village to plant rice, corn and millet. After three and a half years, the Japanese left, and people who worked on the land remained to farm here.

During the Emergency, the New Village was formed. Farmers and tappers were concentrated in the present site and barbed wire encircled the residential area. Some farmers left the area, most remained and new residents added to the population. After the Emergency, the British subdivided the land and let interested farmers draw lots to obtain farm land. The lots must have been about two acres each as most farmers today claim that the land area they work on now is about that size. Most residents do not own the farm land. Their house lot and the farm lot are leased from the state on TOL, temporary occupation licence. The lease is 30 years in duration, but the state has the right to take back the

land whenever it sees fit. One resident lamented that it was his "miscalculation" that he did not purchase the land when land grants were offered to them by the colonial government. As he and his father were working on it without having to pay for any rent during the Japanese Occupation, they were not willing to pay for the grants. Instead, they have been paying a temporary rent of $2 on yearly basis to maintain farming rights. Most farmers did the same. As a result, most farmers do not have ownership of the land they have been working on all along.

About ten years ago when the industrial estate was being constructed, careless planning caused water-logging of the farm land and contamination of the irrigation ditches. The state did not take action to save the farmers' life line. Instead, it stopped collecting rent. Affected farmers stopped paying the rent and unwittingly lost their right to fight for their own survival. Ten years ago, Huang Jia Shan was the largest green vegetable producer of the region. Vegetable farmers earned good profit for their hard labor. Today, diversification and out migration are the solution for many families. Only those lucky enough not to be affected by the water-logging problem continue farming. Some took advantage of the situation to "sell" their land right to relatives and neighbors who were

willing to continue their dependency on land. As the thirty-year lease period will end in 1986 and 1987, most residents are worried about their farm, their house lot, and their future. Just before I left Huang Jia Shan, rumor had it that the state government plans to turn the abandoned farmland to the north of the New Village into a race course as part of the scheme to convert the general area into a tourist attraction. Huang Jia Shan New Village is to be relocated elsewhere.

Whether the Industrial Estate has brought development to its vicinity is difficult to assess. The Industrial Estate offers job opportunities to 8.5% of the working population of Huang Jia Shan, and brings the New Village closer to an incipient township created by the housing opposite the Industrial Estate. But it also created adverse effects for the originally farm- based community.

Today's Huang Jia Shan gives outsiders a mood of prosperity and peace though it is listed by a government report as one of the New Villages with the least potential to expand and develop. This may very well be true as the New Village is located between the abandoned farmland to the east and the northeast and rubber plantations to the south and the west.

Huang Jia Shan is still a busy village. Hourly buses pass by the village houses that line the road. The

houses are constructed the same way most Chinese houses are, with brick lower walls and cement floors, topped by wooden upper frames and zinc roofs. They are simple and well ventilated like the Malay kampong houses, but they are less stylized and sit solidly on the ground. There is always a small garden around the house and chickens and ducks running around among a few dogs. Pigs are prohibited by law because of the sanitary and religious problems they may create for neighboring Malay communities.

Unlike the Chinese residents at pekan Nan Mei who wait patiently at their shop for customers to arrive, at Huang Jia Shan, the able bodied Chinese are seldom home during the day. Only the old, the young, and the invalid sit around the house. Farmers leave their houses around 7 am. They come home for lunch around noon, take a short nap when the sun is burning hot, and return to the field until 7 pm. There are no weekends, no holidays. But there are rainy days when no work can be done on the farm. The usually hard working farmers would sit in front of the TV and watch rented Cantonese soap operas, a popular pass-time. The only other time when people are not seen working is after dark. The rest of the family may be watching video tapes, while men would often go out to visit, or go into town to visit the coffee shops.

"There is always work to do on the vegetable farm." When I asked a farmer if his two-acre farm could support the jia, he turned around to me and said, "We don't ask about gou che ,if there is enough to feed all the mouths in the family, we ask about gou zuo, if there is enough work to be done by the available manpower." This concept of gou zuo was brought home to me by a young man in his late teens. He is the youngest of a family with five working members, two parents and three sons, working on the two-acre vegetable farm. This young man told me that since there is not enough work to do for all five of them, he thought he would buy a van and sell groceries from house to house "if I strike the lottery and buy a van." This may be the best example to illustrate Harrell's "Chinese entrepreneurial ethic" described in his 1985 article Why do the Chinese Work So Hard.

There is a local temple built on the outskirts of the village. The god worshipped there is the Kai Shan Sheng Wang (the holy king who opened up the jungle). Local residents have diverse opinions about who this god is, but they all agree that this god is very powerful at curing illnesses.

Huang Jia Shan is composed of two sections, the old part and the new part. The new part is a recently cleared rubber plantation to the southeast of the

original New Village. Twenty houses have been added. There are seventy-one buildings in the old part of the village. All together, about ninety family groups live in Huang Jia Shan.

Huang Jia Shan is not a closed community. It produces vegetables for the market through middlemen, and has to obtain other daily commodities from the markets outside the community. There are two small grocery shops at Huang Jia Shan, but supplies are limited to mostly dry goods or perishable cooking ingredients. While husbands from Sa Le, a Chinese community one mile away from Nan Mei, usually go to pekan Nan Mei by motorcycle or bicycle to buy meat, fish, and other cooking ingredients every morning, men from Huang Jia Shan would go to nearby towns a few miles away to get food items. Vendors do go to the village to sell food stuff. The women stay at home to do the purchasing from the vendors.

If we adopt Skinner's typology of Chinese marketing structures, Huang Jia Shan can be called a nucleated village or village community, where only minor market and small shops exist. Pekan Nan Mei, on the other hand, is a standard market town where a standard market serves as the end point where goods are transported from the outside and local products are collected and sent to the outside market. The New Village Nan Mei section is a residential village with no

markets. It was annexed to pekan Nan Mei and has become integrated into the general structure of a larger Nan Mei over the past thirty years. It does not confine to the typology Skinner proposed (1964:6-7). Size-wise, Nan Mei is smaller than Huang Jia Shan, but function-wise, part of the Nan Mei community provides services to the rest of the community and to a wider area surrounding the Nan Mei community.

(DIAGRAM 1b)

Sa Le

Sa Le is the village I understand the least. Since data from Sa Le will be used for comparative purpose in this study, it is only briefly described

Sa Le is about one mile from Nan Mei on the other side of the B.R. Industrial Estate. Almost all residents are Tiewchew dialect speakers. In comparison with Nan Mei, Sa Le is a more closed community for two reasons. According to informants' analysis, Tiewchew people are more closely knit and tend to be wary of outsiders. Historical development of the community may offer a more objective explanation.

Sa Le is a Catholic community with a unique history. The area where the village is located today is said to be the property of the St. Mary's church of France, which was granted a 200-year lease by the British colonial government. It was initially a Shan-Ba (an

uncultivated tropical jungle). The Catholic church encouraged its parishioners to help open the jungle. The acreage opened up by the jia would be the land area that the jia could occupy and farm. Rent is payable to the church, not the state government. Rights of the land and the construction on the land are inheritable but not resalable. The only condition the church imposed on the people then was that anyone who worked and lived on the church owned land must be a Catholic.

Sa Le residents acknowledge that they are all Catholic. Each house has the symbols of Catholicism expressed the way non-Catholic Chinese express their Chineseness. As one walks by the Sa Le houses, one inevitably finds the framed picture of the Virgin Mary and infant Jesus outside the door above the door way. At Nan Mei and Huang Jia Shan, this is where the Chinese villagers display their identity on a wooden plaque. The plaque usually bears the name of one of the recent founders of the house, the name of a business, or the geographic region where the jia originated in China. My informants said if one sees the place name Long Xi, the jia must have the surname of Lee. "You don't even have to ask." Here at Sa Le, Catholics identify themselves with the belief, rather than the descent. But it is expressed according to the way their non-Catholic ancestors knew how.

As one may have guessed, Sa Le residents display pictures or statues of the Virgin Mary on the altar in the center of the front hall against the wall, directly facing the doorway. My niece Beautiful Lotus showed me the altar her late father-in-law built by hand. It looks like a museum piece of traditional Chinese furniture with dark lacquer finishing. Above the altar table hung the picture of the Virgin Mary. There are candles and flower vases on the altar. Placing an incense burner in the center of the altar table, it would be just like the altar in a typical Chinese house at Nan Mei or Huang Jia Shan. This shows how a western religion can be expressed in a Malaysian Chinese village. When I visited Sa Le, it was around Easter time, and every house had palm leaves displayed at the altar or above the doorway. The church building is western in design. But on the wall inside the parish Father's office, there is a picture of the Virgin Mary clad in the traditional flowing style Chinese clothes one might see in a Chinese opera. The Virgin Mary was standing in the manner the goddess of Mercy is usually depicted, with a lotus bud in her hand.

How well accepted are Catholics among the Chinese villagers? At Nan Mei, the few Catholic Chinese families are well integrated in the community. At Sa Le, everyone is a Catholic. Local people don't have much to say about the subject, except commenting that it was the

forefathers of these _jia_ who converted to Catholicism. Once the man becomes a Catholic, his offspring inherits the faith and will be Catholic.

I was told by the Nan Mei and Haung Jia Shan residents that the deities worshiped at one's home are often inherited by the following generation. But several _jia_ have for one reason or another sent the previously worshiped _jia_ gods to the sky, and invited different gods home, with the consent of the two gods (or two sets of gods). But the Catholic faith has been seen inherted from father to children. I tend to suspect that there is a greater resemblance between ancestor worship and Catholic faith in the local people's mind. If this is so, then, it may be an example of a wholesale transfer of the descent ideology to the imported belief system. Worshipping and venerating the ancestors, in a Catholic home is transformed to worshiping the gods of the forefathers.

Marrying one's daughter to a Catholic may not be a well received idea. The first time I met Beautiful Lotus was when her father became extremely upset about her going out with a Catholic young man from Sa Le. He was going to "break her legs", but decided to send her to my house in the capital city so that she would stop the romance with this Catholic. Beautiful Lotus met another Catholic from Sa Le, and married him without her father's

consent. Her father disowned her, saying that when he dies, Beautiful Lotus will not be able to hold incense sticks for him, now that she has become a Catholic.

Perhaps because of its unique historical and economic background, Sa Le used to be a relatively isolated community. The term "defended community" would describe this community well. Sa Le residents prefer not to talk to "outsiders." In fact, because the village is situated at the end of the bus route, strangers to this village can be identified by the villagers on the bus even before he/she disembarks at Sa Le. I was repeatedly warned by my host and friends at Nan Mei, just a mile away from Sa Le, of the fierce dogs at Sa Le. My host's daughter who has many school friends at Sa Le volunteered to accompany me there when I visited the village.

Most of the villagers are said to be "related." During the pioneer period about 60 to 70 years ago, many parishioners sent news back to their Tiewchew villages in China to invite relatives and neighbors over to Malaya to open up the church owned jungle land. That may explain the fact that almost all villagers are Tiewchew. The best land was developed into vegetable farms. The more hilly areas were used to plant rubber trees. Residents worked on their own vegetable farms. Some also tapped rubber for the church for a wage. The church operated a Chinese elementary school and an English elementary

school on its premises. Parishioners worship at the church, support one another when death occurs, and mourn their fellow villagers at the church cemetery. There is even a coffin maker in the village who provides the deceased with coffins.

As the population of Sa Le grew over the past half a century, the number of buildings increased from some twenty houses to the present 150 plus, on land area of about 500 acres. These figures cannot be verified, but crowding and underemployment have resulted in outmigration and the participation in the wage economy outside of Sa Le.

Today, Sa Le is described by the District Office as one of the most affluent communities in Central Malacca. Houses have been reconstructed, fruit trees and cocoa plants are seen among rubber small holdings and rubber sheet-making sheds. A home owned sago mill produces sago flour to sell to outside markets and even to Singapore. Among the residents who do not migrate out, there are not only farmers and tappers, but also business managers, contractors, teachers, clerks, taxi-drivers, and laborers. Diversification is apparent here, the same way it is in Nan Mei and Huang Jia Shan.

Like Huang Jia Shan, Sa Le can be classified as a nucleated village with minor market and small shops. In terms of economic diversification, however, Sa Le is

more diversified and its residents have higher educational attainment than residents in Huang Jia Shan.

CHAPTER V

THE *JIA* AND DESCENT IDEOLOGY

Observations in rural Malaysia reconfirm earlier studies that the Chinese lineage system did not develop outside the homeland. Although localized descent groups fail to develop outside China, the descent ideology formed the basis of institutions that took shape during the pioneer stages of Chinese immigration to the *Nanyang*. These institutions represent the adaptive response of Chinese social organization in a society where native Chinese institutions were lacking and local social institutions failed to serve the newcomers. After the Chinese immigrants became integrated into the social economic environment of the host society, and when the local institutions reached out to include the Chinese community, earlier descent ideology based organizations gradually lost their initial functions.

But descent ideology has not lost its place in the Chinese community. This chapter sets out to discuss the locus of descent ideology from the viewpoint of its members.

Defining the Jia

The locus of the descent ideology in Malaysia of the mid 80s is the jia. The jia (or chia in Freedman 1958; Cohen 1976) is the native construct of the descent group. The jia has been variously termed in literature as the domestic group, the family, the household, or the compound. The household and the compound denote living arrangements, which may include non-agnate members living in the building, and often exclude agnatic members who live outside the dwelling. This is especially problematic when members of the descent group pursue different economic activities which require dispersed residential arrangements. The family better describes the Chinese descent group, but the term becomes less precise when a descent group expands to include several conjugal families across two or three generations. The native term, the jia, is thus more appropriate for the discussion of the descent group. The traditional terms of the lineage, jia zu or zong zu (or Tsung-tsu, Tsu in Freedman 1958), and the branch and sub-lineage, zi and fang (or chih and fang in Freedman 1958) are seldom part of the daily vocabulary of the Malacca rural Chinese. Even the term fang, which denotes the sub-family unit, such as the conjugal unit of the married son living together with the parents, has seldom been heard used among the villagers. (Definitions can be found in Hu

1948:18; Fried 1953:31; Hsu 1963:61-64. It is also discussed in Cohen 1972:57, 177-78.)

The jia is a conceptual unit that endures through the patrilineal line. Membership is prescribed through patrilineage. The extension of the patrilineal line requires the incorporation of the wives and daughters-in-law into the jia and the production of children. Adoption is an alternative method of membership recruitment, in cases when no son is born to extend the line, or if the parents want to have an adopted son to induce ("welcome") future sons. Exogamous marriage is observed. Cousin marriages are discouraged.

The jia has two aspects: as a ritual unit that focuses on the worship of the ancestors, and as an economic unit that pools resources and shares consumption. When the jia is at its earlier stage of development, the economic unit is also the ritual unit. When the jia members form separate economic units in the later stage of the jia development, the ritual unit of the jia becomes a higher order unit that binds the economic units together. The jia rituals that focus on the ancestor worship solidify and reinforce group unity. Deity worship of gods and ghosts for the protection of the jia members almost always accompanies ancestor worship. The jia may or may not have exploitable property or estate. Therefore, it is not a land and/or

property based corporation.

The _jia_ authority is usually vested in the hand of the pater. The _jia_ in its elementary form consists of the nuclear family. At this stage, the economic unit is also the ritual unit. Early immigrants with no ancestral graves in Malaya often began their _jia_ in this fashion. In its most developed stage as observed in the rural communities, it may be in the form of the the grand family (Freedman's terminology) with grandparents, parents, all or most of the male children and their conjugal families and unmarried children all living together and forming one economic and ritual unit. This is rare. Most often observed is a _jia_ consisting of several economic units with dispersed living arrangements but performing _jia_ rituals as a unit at the home of the most senior descendant of the group. Dispersion occurs when members are married and set up a separate household and stove, and support their individual unit with funds derived from their own economic activities. Dispersion may or may not be permanent, and it does not necessarily require jural division of the _jia_ estate.

The _jia_ thus can be defined as a conceptual unit with its boundary defined by patrilineage. As an economic unit, it pools and shares resources; as a ritual entity, it performs rituals focusing on the ancestors. The economic unit and the ritual unit may or may not

coincide, but they are linked into one entity by a common ideology, that is, the jia as a descent group.

Emic View of the Jia

The villagers see the jia as a group of people related to one another by blood through the father's line. They all share the same surname, and at one time shared the same living father, or grandfather. They worship the same immediate ancestors, and call themselves women Lee jia (we the Lees), or tamen Wu jia (they the Wus). With people of the same surname and sharing some distant ancestor (tong yige zuzong) back in China, they call them shi women ziji ren (our own people), but not close enough to be zijia ren (members of the same jia). After all, they have their own immediate ancestors to worship at home.

Perhaps because of the shallow settlement history of the Chinese as immigrants in this part of Malaysia, and because of the individualistic nature of immigration in the late 19th and early and mid 20th century, most of the rural Chinese in the New Villages do not have memmories or knowledge of beyond one or two generations above them. Typically, one jia often has one generation of immediate ancestors buried in the yishan (dialectal association-owned Chinese cemeteries) on the outskirts of the city of Malacca, and two or three

generations of living members.

The living members sometimes reside in the same house. Some consider this arrangement ideal because it keeps the _jia_ together. Very often, this _jia_ is also an enomomic unit where all the members, or a majority of the members, pursue joint economic activities to support the _jia_ as a group. Such economic activities are more likely land based and thus require heavy labor input.

One Lee _jia_ at Huang Jia Shan has maintained such a living arrangement and economic arrangement until today. According to Lee A Ming, a twenty-five year old factory worker, the ninth child of Lee Bo Mu and his wife, there are 16 people living together in this _jia_: mother, three married brothers and their families, one unmarried brother, and two unmarried daughters (A Ming is one of the two). The Chinese style village house is built on the ground with a brick foundation and wooden frame. It is rectangular in plan view, with a hall facing the front door and a row of rooms on both sides of the hall. The kitchen is often at the back of the house behind the hall. Each brother has a room. The Big (oldest) brother, his wife and two children share one room, Second brother, his wife and three children share one room, Third brother, his wife and a baby share one room, Fourth brother has a room to himself, A Ming shares one room next to the kitchen at the back of the house

with her sister and mother. In May 1986, the oldest child of the third generation was eight, the youngest was just one month. The Big brother's wife was five months pregnant.

All brothers plant vegetables, all sisters-in-law share kitchen duty. One sister-in-law works in the factory, as do A Ming and her sister.

Conflicts often are unavoidable when many adult members and their conjugal families live together. A Ming agrees that such conflicts exist, but "we share the same blood, so we do not mind, we forget and forgive." Some villagers voice the opinion that dispersion of jia members is preferred, to avoid conflicts and to take advantage of the market economy. A Ming's widowed mother, however, insists that the jia remain as one.

The jia members sometimes have separate living arrangements and pursue different economic interests. Although physically dispersed, the unity of the jia group is maintained and demonstrated in periodic gatherings. These gatherings often are accompanied by ritual activities. Dispersed living arrangements seem to be closely related to the nature of the jia economic base. If the jia began with farming economy, the likelihood for the jia to remain in the farming occupation and for the jia members to remain together is greater than if the original jia economy was other than farming. Exceptions

do exist though.

The Wu jia of a Chinese village about two miles from Nan Mei originated as a non-farm family. The pioneer Old Wu used to be a building contractor. The initial jia rented a plot of land from a neighbor to plant rice for home consumption. The home was also built on rented land. All sons' weddings were performed at the original home. The four sons of the jia became teachers and businessmen, and in time, established three different households. Big son's conjugal family lived with the father at the original home in the village, the fourth son was not married then and was living with the father and Big brother. The second son and his conjugal family lived in the state of Negri Sembilan; and the third son and his conjugal family lived in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur. Children of these three brothers talked about visiting Second uncle's house or Third uncle's house, but the village home, was called grandfather's house. Later when Grandfather died, they began talking about it as Big uncle's house. Although houses are dispersed, the jia remains as one. All the brothers and their conjugal families return to the original house to celebrate Chinese New Year and other calendrical and ritual occasions even after the old pioneer father died. It is not the house that matters, in fact the house was built on rented land. It is the fact that the ancestral

altar, which is the focal point of most celebrations and rituals, is there.

Membership of the jia is based on patrilineal descent. If the jia is an economic unit, membership entitles the person to share consumption of pooled resources, to take part in the jia enterprise if it exists, to have the right to inheritance if there is any. Membership imposes the obligation on the members to submit to the jia authority, to participate in the pooling of resources, to care for the elderly members, and to extend the descent line. If the jia is larger than one economic unit, the jia is sustained by its constituent families, both in terms of expenses for the joint acitivities, and the physical participation of joint activities, which, as mentioned above, are often accompanied by rituals involving the ancestors.

Patrilineal descent is passed through the male descentants of the jia group. On the surface, rural Chinese today are more open to the idea of having children of either sex, but male children are still highly desired. Lan Gu has five children, the youngest being a male. Her sister-in-law has six children. After four daughters, she gave birth to a son. In an attempt to have another son, she "gambled" or bo, and got another daughter instead. Lan Gu and her sister-in-law often joked about how wise Lan Gu was, submitting to fate

rather than trying to bo with fate.

The male members of the jia physically replace the old and dying members of the previous generation. They also care for the old and the deceased. A 24 year old young man working at a factory near Nan Mei told me he already had one son and one daughter. But he wanted to have two more sons, "so that if one son is lazy, and another son does not care for me when I become old, I will have one other good son to depend on." Old age dependency on sons is expected by parents. It is also adaptive in the Malaysian context for the state does not have a social welfare system that cares for the aged. The jia is the private social welfare institution.

The fears of having no one to bury oneself, and not being able to have a proper burial are real among the older villagers. Many talk about saving a lao ben (old age capital) for old age and for the funeral. A 60 year old mother expressed the need to have male descendants, so that the gods and ancestors on the altar will always have incense burning in front of them. I was told the story of a rich Chinese in Kuala Lumpur who reserved a piece of hilltop land with good geomancy to build a shrine for himself, so that after his death he will be worshipped.

Children, especially male children, are viewed as belonging to the jia, not the individual parent. When

Beautiful Lotus' eldest brother and sister-in-law wanted to move out of the jia home to set up their own neolocal residence after a jia quarrel, the fifty-five year old mother and her four unmarried daughters told the sister-in-law that it would be fine for her and her husband to move out, but their two-year old son must stay.

Adoption is still one of the ways to acquire children in case the couple has no children, or, has not had a male child after several tries. It is said that adopting a male child will bring along a brother. Mr. Yap of Nan Mei adopted a son after having four daughters. Consequently, his wife bore him seven more children, three sons and four more daughters. Theoretically, adopted sons are like real sons. They carry the name of the jia, they take care of the old parents, and if there is inheritance, they have a share as would any other son. Mr. Win of Nan Mei, in his late twenties, inherited his father's estate and business. He was adopted because his father had no children. Mr. Win and his family now live with his widowed adopted mother, and her widowed mother. The two older ladies are dependent on him for care in their old age. Nan Mei residents claimed that among the Hokkien, daughters and sons both receive inheritance. Sons receive land, houses and businesses, daughters receive rubber land and money. The Hakka do not practice this. Only the male children have the right to

inheritance.

It has been argued in literature that in a society where dowry is practiced, the dowry daughters receive at marriage can be considered as a form of inheritance. Sung, in his discussion of the southern Hokkien inheritance practice in Taiwan, claimed that there are two types of property that can be divided: the ancestral inheritance, and the family acquired inheritance. The former remains within the family line through the male members, the latter can be divided among all the children, female as well as male (1981). It is not clear exactly what the rules of inheritance are among the different dialect groups of Chinese living in Nan Mei and Huang Jia Shan. I was told by a Hokkien that during the _jia_ division, all the brothers received businesses and rubber land, all his sisters received money. Another Hokkien man inherited the land and the houses on it. His sister inherited the land and the houses just adjacent to his. A Hainanese woman said she was given some rubber land by her father, while her brothers were given land and the houses on the land. It must be remembered that not all rural Chinese have property that can be passed on to the next generation, and in fact, most of the villagers in the two communities I studied have not had any inherited land or businesses. Inheritance rules apply only when there is property to divide.

Female children have also been adopted. In the Wu jia, for instance, four cases of female adoption have occurred in the past 50 years. The third daughter was "given to" another jia as a young daughter-in-law when she was 11. She died of hard work and malnutrition during the Japanese invasion. The fourth daughter was "given way" to a jia of the same surname as a young daughter when she was "not yet 10 days old." The first and second daughters accompanied the baby sister on a trishaw (three-wheeled man-power vehicle). They returned with a red-packet containing two ringgits. The two sisters got 20 cents each from the adopting mother. The fifth daughter was given away as a young daughter-in-law. The second daughter of the Wu jia was married and divorced. According to the first daughter who told me the jia stories, the mother brought a girl back for the second daughter to adopt as her own, to relieve her sorrow. The second daughter subsequently died in childbirth during her second marriage. Her adopted daughter, A-Fang, then only three years old, remained as a member of the jia, and grew up with the eldest son of the jia and his children until she married at the age of 19.

Adoption is still practiced today. According to a woman at Huang Jia Shan, it is now more difficult to find a jia that is willing to provide children, and also

it costs a great deal of money. She knew of several recent cases when the adopting couple agreed with the pregnant mother to adopt, regardless of the sex of the future child, and pay 1000 ringgit per pound of the birth weight of the infant. If it is a male child, additional payment will be arranged. One mother bore a nine-pound female, and in return, received 9000 ringgit. The youngest adopted male I knew of at Nan Mei was 26, and the youngest adopted female was 9. I do not know the amount of money involved in the transactions.

An adopted young daughter-in-law is seldom heard of now. The practice is rejected by the younger generation. Mrs. Lee Jie Wu of Huang Jia Shan is by birth the first daughter of the above mentioned Wu jia. She has seven children of her own. She never adopted, nor gave any children for adoption, although she is very familiar with adoption from experience with her own female siblings. She was very found of A-Fang, the adopted daughter of her late sister. Since her eldest son was not yet married, she suggested that he, then in his late 20s, take A-Fang as his wife. This suggestion was strongly objected to by her son. He and A-Fang "grew up like siblings." Mrs. Lee Jie Fu's youngest son was graduating from high school in 1986. Mrs. Lee told me that a few years ago she mentioned to her youngest son that she would get a young daughter-in-law for him. His

response was, "if you brought her back, I would beat her to death." It has since become a joke in the Lee jia. Mrs. Lee's own adopted out sisters are now 45 and 43 years old. They became an adopted daughter and a young daughter-in-law almost a half of a century ago.

Daughters and adopted daughters are full members of the jia until they marry. A married daughter becomes a member of the husband's jia. But she maintains her natal surname and has certain obligations to her own parents. Among others, daughters visit their own parents during Chinese New Year, in addition to social visits on other occasions; they mourn for their dead parents as a daughter (though some mothers-in-laws may forbid daughters-in-law to do so). An adopted out daughter loses her place in her natal jia, and thus does not have the obligations towards it. She becomes the daughter of her adopted jia. But at Nan Mei one adopted out daughter had been observed attending her biological father's funeral as a daughter, but she observed a shorter mourning period. An adopted daughter-in-law maintains her daughter status in her natal home. She is accepted as a member of the adopted jia upon adoption, but full membership is confirmed only when she marries. A sense of uncertainty is often present before the consummation of the marriage.

Lan Gu is 45 years old, an adopted daughter. Xiu Jie, 43, became an adopted daughter-in-law when she was five. They are biological sisters to Mrs. Lee Jie Fu of Huang Jia Shan. When Mrs. Lee was preparing the funeral dress as a daughter for her own father, her mother instructed her to ask her sister, now Xiu Jie, to share the cost in order to "accumulate merit in heaven." But she should not ask Lan Gu. Xiu Jie left her natal jia as a xifu (daughter-in-law) going to her future husband's jia, so she is still considered her father's daughter. Lan Gu, on the other hand, was given away as a daughter, so she belongs to the adopted jia. During weddings or funerals at the Wu jia, Lan Gu participates as a relative, not as a married out jia member.

Membership does not cease to exist when a person dies. Deceased male members and their spouses are commemorated through ancestor worship. The immediate ancestors receive the most attention. They remain as an important part of the rites of passage of jia rituals. When the new bride enters the husband's home, she bows to the altar of the deceased parents first before being introduced to other members of the jia. If the parents of the groom are still living, she bows to the parents, then pays respect to the altar of the ancestors of the husbands' jia, to express submission of herself to the authority of the jia she is now a member of. Because of

the immigrant status of the rural Chinese, almost all jia have their more distant ancestors' graves in China. And each jia has at least one or two recently deceased ancestors buried in Malaysia. These immediate ancestors occupy the ancestral altar together with more distant ancestors of the jia. But rituals and memorialism are mainly for the former.

Physically absent members of the jia are never discounted as part of the group, the only exception being married out female members. They become members of another jia. During the survey interviews in three rural Malaysian Chinese villages, the interviewees were asked to list the members of the jia. The listing gave the initial impression that these Chinese villagers have more male than female offspring. Further enquiry proved that married daughters were all excluded. The response from the interviewees was unanimously, "yes, but they have married out already (yijin gia chuqu la)." On the other hand, daughters-in-law are always members of the jia, whether or not they have already borne children.

To the Chinese, the house is also called the jia, which refers to the structure that houses the family group. Male children working away from home, or not living in the same house, are still considered jia members. Married male children who have set up their own household away from home sometimes pose problems during

the interview. The response to male children not living under the same roof is often "already moved out (yijin ban chuqu la), or "not living here together (bu zhuzai yiqi)." They do not belong to the same house, but they still belong to the jia group. They are ziji jia ren (member of the jia). The family group can be as simple as a nuclear family, or as complex as a grand family with parents, several married sons and their nuclear family, and unmarried sons and daughters. Although the desire to keep the family group physically together is still present among the parents' generation, economic arrangements of the jia members, especially the younger generation, have made the desire harder to realize.

The jia in its early stage can be considered as an economic unit. An economic unit is both a production unit and a consumption unit. As a production unit, all jia members engage in income generating activities to jointly maintain the well being of the group. The jia does not necessarily engage in one type of economic activity. In fact 74.6% of jia at Nan Mei, and 77% at Huang Jia Shan are diversified. While the parents may be farming on land, some of the working members of the jia are generating income through self employment and/or wage jobs. The income from various sources is pooled, especially during early stage of jia development. At this stage, the jia authority, usually the pater, manages

the budget and represents the jia. However, when the need to pool resources diminishes, especially when the number of non-producers reduces and adult producers establish separate households outside the home, each producer tends to become more financially independent. The pater's role in the jia financial management tends to become less important. The pater, nonetheless, formally represents the jia in ritual and community affairs. Though the jia becomes less significant as an income pooling and sharing unit at this stage of development, gifts and remittance usually flow back to the jia. These resources are used to support jia ritual activities as well as the non-working dependents.

Investment using pooled resources in tangible property, such as rubber land or real estate, is not uncommon. The purpose of investment, however, is more for security than accumulation of wealth in order to enlarge dividable estate for the sons' generation, as Cohen suggested for his Chinese rural residents (1976). Accumulation of property for the children was a concept more acceptable among financially more established residents of the past generation. Today, among people above 50 "saving money" is often referred to as putting aside old age security money (lao ben). In the face of economic diversity and the early dispersion of the jia members, parents often have doubts whether dispersed

children will be able to return home and support the parents in old age.

Social investment, in the form of education, both academic improvement and skills enhancement, has become more important to many, especially those who have the ability to provide. With older people, however, putting aside old age security appears to be more important than social investment. Perhaps the apprehensive attitude toward ethnic discrimination, usefulness of education as a means of social mobility, and the pioneer spirit of making a living with one's own hands make some older residents more skeptical about social investment. This is generally not observed among residents under 60 years of age. Social investment can be considered as one form of early inheritance from the parent generation to the child's generation. In this sense, this "early inheritance" is part of jia resource redistribution, rather than the transfer of jural rights.

The production unit may be better termed as an income pooling unit (See Wong 1984). A unit of production has traditionally been used to describe subsistence economy when all able bodied members of the family or family group are engaged in the same form of production as a working group. According to Engels, capitalism interrupted subsistence economy, and the traditional family based unit of production broke up

(1884). In the rural Chinese society in Malaysia, subsistence economy never existed. Even in the pioneer stage of early immigrants, market economy was the primary form of economic existence. For the vegetable farmers, the _jia_ used to work together as a group to produce marketable goods and share pooled income. With today's diversification, the _jia_ does not often function as a production team, but it is still considered by the Chinese conceptually as a unit that works on different jobs for the common goal, to maintain the _jia_ as a group. In this sense, the production unit has a new meaning.

The economic unit is not static in form. At different stages of the _jia_ development, the economic unit assumes different configurations. The high degree of fluidity in the configuration is also a consequence of the fluctuating economic situation in Malaysia, which is heavily influenced by the world primary product market, particularly for tin and rubber.

As a social welfare unit, the _jia_ is responsible for the dependent members of the group. In the urban areas, such as the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, private home care for the aged has become a social institution only in the mid 1980s. In rural Chinese communities, old parents desire living with one of the sons. The fact that the stem form of the _jia_ is a common scene in all three communities, and the fact that almost all elderly

are living with their _jia_ members, is evidence that the _jia_ is a private social welfare institution. The ideology of the _jia_ as a group plays an important role in supporting the existence of such institution. Social pressure among the community members ensures that each _jia_ cares for its elderly.

The only two cases I came across in 1986 where elderly persons were not living with their children were exceptions. One woman in her seventies occupied one New Village home at Nan Mei by herself. She chose to order the son and his family to leave her house because they were "not filial" in her sense. She must have felt embarrassed about the arrangement because I was told by other villagers not to ask her about the arrangement. The other old couple aged 82 and 73 lived by themselves in Huang Jia Shan. Their decision to stay at the old _jia_ house was probably motivated by the desire to maintain the right to the New Village house. As the land right belongs to the state, anyone leaving the occupancy unfulfilled gives up the right to the building on the TOL land. The day I visited the old couple, one of their daughters was visiting them, and the 82 year old man just returned on his bicycle after helping on the vegetable farm that his relatives were working on.

The _jia_ is a ritual unit. Just as social pressure to conform to culturally prescribed behavior

acts as an external force for the rural Chinese to maintain the _jia_ and its ideology, _jia_ rituals can be considered as an internal measure to symbolically reinforce the descent ideology. _Jia_ rituals are here identified as symbolic behavior that call for the involvement of the agnatic ancestors in the acts of the living members, be it witnessing, approving, blessing, or simply being informed of the current events. Such symbolic behavior almost always requires the assemblage of all _jia_ living members as well. For example, calendrical events such as the Chinese New Year celebration and the _Qing Ming_ grave visit, and the _ji re_ (death anniversary) of the recently deceased members always bring _jia_ members together to perform rituals as a group in front of the agnatic ancestors. Such gathering is a right as well as an obligation of only the _jia_ members.

At these ritual gatherings, membership of the _jia_ determines attendance. The ritual behavior reinforces membership and group solidarity. Women and children follow the husband and father to his _jia_. Theoretically, in old age, a couple with no male descendent would have to celebrate the Chinese Year and commemorate their ancestors' graves alone, and their graves will not be attended. This poses real problems to the _jia_ lacking of male offspring. A daughter may move

in with the parents. Matrilocal residence solves housing and rent problems for the daughter and her conjugal family. But uxorilocal marriage where the husband marries into the wife's _jia_ has not been reported in the three communities studied.

In Chapter VI the concept of the _ziji ren_ (our own people) will be further discussed. The _jia_ is the smallest _ziji ren_ unit which is composed of members linked by patrilineal descent. Although affinal and matrilateral relatives are recognized as _ziji ren_, they are not part of the _jia_ group that worship the same ancestors, have the same responsibility towards the members and the group, and gather to celebrate rites of passages and annual festivities. Only _jia_ members have rights and obligations to the estate and other properties, only if the estate and properties exist and are dividable.

The developmental stages of the Malaysian Chinese _jia_ partially explains the presence or absence of the estate. Almost all of the Chinese immigrants to Malaysia came without any financial resources or even human resources, _kao shan_ (literally means a mountain behind someone as a physical support, financial support) or _guan xi_ (connections, someone to pull strings). The first generation Malaysian Chinese, therefore, had no estate to begin their _jia_. If they were successful,

through hardship, good luck (careful timing of the rise and fall of the international rubber market) and being thrifty, they might have accumulated an estate by the time they died. If they were not successful, which was often the case (See T'ien 1953:2), there would be another generation trying to succeed in Malaya without the jia estate as the initial capital. Most of the Chinese in the New Villages are second generation Malaysians with limited or no inheritance from the previous generation.

Those with inherited jia estate often inherited the parent's occupation together with the jia estate. The son who inherits the right to the farm land continues being a farmer, the son who inherits the grocery store continues managing the grocery store. Expansion of inherited business is possible, but usually on a humble scale. Accumulation of wealth leading to the creation of different social classes has not been seen under local conditions. Very often, the next (the third) generation is forced to return to being pioneers again because of the changing social and economic environments. Few people of the younger generation are content with maintaining the economic pursuits of their parents. Wage economy provides opportunities outside the confines of the jia economic base. With a comparatively better education, easier transportation, and a wider kindred network, often the younger generation ventures into

territories their parents were unable to enter. In this process, inheritance may even become a hindrance to an individual's career ambition unless the jia estate can be converted to other forms of capital that can assist new ventures.

The above generalization describes well the development histories of the jia at Nan Mei and Huang Jia Shan. For instance, the Lim jia at Nan Mei began with Mr. Lim's grandfather, coming to Nan Mei to begin a grocery shop around 1930. In his father's generation, the estate included a grocery shop, a gas fuel pump, a coconut oil and dry coconut production business, pork vending, and a lorry for transportation business. Before his death, the father divided the businesses according to the capability of the eight sons. All female children also inherited money and rubber estates. As the local Hokkien say, the Hokkiens pass the inheritance to both male and female children. Mr. Lim and one of his brothers are now managing the grocery shop they inherited from their father. The shop has expanded under their management, and is considered as one of the most reliable shops in the pekan. But Mr. Lim is not in favor of changing the direction of the small business beyond the present status. He prefers to maintain what there is and accumulate enough for his children and for his old age, as lao ben. Mr. Lim's jia is one of the few Catholic jia

in Nan Mei. Religion does not seem to have affected the ideology of the jia as a decent group. In his thirties, Mr. Lim has six young children. But Mr. Lim does not expect his children to carry on the family business because of "the hardship we have endured." He expects the children to be better off than the parents and hopes that the children's future will not be hindered by the traditional jia business.

The Shaw jia owns a grocery and herbal medicine shop at the pekan. The grandfather and the father were the pioneers and accumulated estates which Mr. Shaw and his brother inherited. Education and economic opportunities in the city allow Mr. Shaw's children to seek employment away from home. Children come back to visit the parents and celebrate annual festivals, but they are not going to maintain the family business and attempt to expand. The Shaws admit that they now view the family business and the estate as their pension, or lao ben. The estate helped them raise the six children and in future, will maintain them in their old age.

The estate is present in the Lim and the Shaw cases. The estate is the capital of the jia economy. It is not the cohesive force that binds the jia together, as Cohen suggested in his study of rural Chinese in southern Taiwan. Rather, it is the idea of the jia as a descent group that draws dispersed members together periodically.

Most convincing evidence comes from the history of those jia without the jia estate.

The Wu jia once had 10 acres of rubber plantation acquired by the pioneer father earlier in his life. The land was said to have been sold by the father in his life time to provide education for the children. Before the death of the father, the jia economy was already diversified, and two of the four sons established households outside the state of Malacca. The jia, however, maintained its unity as evidenced by the joint rituals. After the death of the father, the rituals continued. The four sons recently borrowed from the bank and bought seven acres of land in Malacca together. The four sons and their retired brother-in-law, Mr. Lee Jie Fu of Huang Jia Shan, are trying to develop an orchard. Rather than accumulating resources to increase the estate for jia division purpose, as described convincingly by Cohen (1976), the Wu jia brothers jointly purchased a piece of land ten years after the death of their father and after the jia has dispersed and separate economic units were establised. The jia estate in fact is more a joint business venture than a form of inheritance for future jia division.

The Wu jia that has never experienced jia division, and the Shaw jia or Yap jia of Nan Mei (discussed in later chapters) that have gone through the

division process share much in common, in particular the ritual aspect of the _jia_. All the Wu brothers return to the _jia_ home, which the eldest brother and his family occupy, to perform rites of passages and to commemorate their parents' death anniversaries. All the Yap brothers of Nan Mei return to their _jia_ home, which the eldest Yap brother and his family occupy, to pray to the immediate ancestors.

Whether the absence of the estate has prevented the _jia_ from subdividing into branches is questionable. If the _jia_ is seen as an astate based corporate unit, then division is part of the development process. However, many of the _jia_ in rural villages do not have the _jia_ estate.

Analytically, the _jia_ is more convincingly a conceptual unit that persists. Division of the _jia_ is related to the division of the _jia_ estate, only when it is present. The estate can be viewed as a part of the _jia_ economy which is not necessarily permanent. It can be accumulated, and can be liquidated before the division. The accumulated estate in the Wu _jia_ was transformed into social capital, which enabled the Wu brothers to later engage in white collar economic activities. Social investment can be considered as a form of inheritance similar to the _jia_ estate that is passed on to the younger generation before the division

of the _jia_ or the death of the father. In fact, social investment, like the jural division of the estate, would lead to the dispersion of the _jia_. Social investment bestows the _jia_ members with the ability to diversify early in the _jia_ development stage. It thus leads to early dispersion of the _jia_ as a localized group. The _jia_ as a conceptual unit, however, continues to exist after the _jia_ ceased to be an economic unit.

The _jia_ as a conceptual unit should not be confused with other emic terms that denote the house (as a structure), the family (as a conjugal family), and the household (where people live under the same roof and share the same cookpot). These concepts are all represented in the Chinese language (Mandarin) by the same word _jia_. The _jia_ as a descent unit is an ideology based grouping which grows out of the family and its ideology. In a way, we may say it transcends the family. It ties together all families that are descended from the same patrilineal ancestor. In rural Malaysia, the depth of such family group is shallow.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL BOUNDARIES AND DESCENT IDEOLOGY

Do rural Chinese communities have a well defined boundary? Since the wire fences of the Emergency came down after 1960, there is no physical boundary that separates the New Village from the surrounding communities, but the fact that the New Village stands out as conglomeration of Chinese style village houses in the rural landscape is undeniable. Today, new housing estates and low cost housing areas have been constructed in suburban areas to accommodate an ever increasing population in and around the city of Malacca. Some of them extend to the vicinity of Nan Mei, Sa Le, and Huang Jia Shan. However, they are markedly different in appearance than the New Villages which have predominantly Chinese village style houses. In terms of density per unit land, the newly constructed housing estates, especially the low cost housing areas, tend to be more space conserving per land unit than in the New Village.

Social Boundaries

Living in Chinese resettlements, the New Village residents tend to have limited contact with neighboring Malays. In the past when Huang Jia Shan and Sa Le were primarily agricultural based, residents used to employ neighboring Malays to help as farmhands during plowing, preparation of paddy or vegetable field bunds, and harvesting times. There was an employer-employee relationship among the Chinese vegetable farmers and the local Malays, and wage was involved. But since most of the farmers themselves were not the owners of the land, a patron-client relationship did not evolve. As farmable land area shrank in Huang Jia Shan, and to a certain degree in Sa Le, due to industrial development nearby, fewer farmhands were required. In addition, as factories in the Industrial Estates began to employ wage laborers, few Malays wanted to work on the farm on an irregular basis.

My informants from Huang Jia Shan still recall the time when the Malays would come to Chinese houses to have cakes and sweets during the Chinese New Year, and the Malays would invite the Chinese to go over to their _kampong_ (village) for _Hari Raya_, the Muslim New Year. The friendly relationships remain, but the frequency of contacts between the two ethnic groups in the village setting has diminished considerably. For younger

individuals, on the other hand, more contact become possible at the work place in the wage economy. Whether such new relationships will lead to a more amiable ethnic relationship on community levels is yet to be seen.

Nan Mei differs from Huang Jia Shan and Sa Le due to its function in local economy. It has had more contact with other local ethnic groups, Malays, Indians, and Chinese. As mentioned earlier, pekan Nan Mei, regardless of its small scale and size, is a "standard market town" serving the population in the vicinity. Nan Mei New Village, being annexed to the pekan, is physically in the backyard of the main street. Furthermore, Nan Mei New Village residents are mostly non-farmers. Most Nan Mei New Village residents work in the city or in factories where daily contacts with non-Chinese are frequent. However, direct contact between Nan Mei New Village Chinese and neighboring non-Chinese at the local level is only occasional, mainly through the pekan.

My informants believe that Nan Mei serves the neighboring community within a radius of about two miles. The surrounding kampong are dispersed and the size of the population is difficult to estimate. The nearest large concentrated settlement within this radius is Sa Le which has about 150 houses. Nan Mei has been important to the local population because it provides not only groceries,

but also essential services. There are two rubber collectors who buy sheet and lump rubber from local small holdings and individual tappers; two vegetable collectors who buy produce wholesale from vegetable growers mainly at Sa Le; three motor repair shops that service motorcycles, cars, as well as bicycles; five coffee shops with one of them opening only at night and remaining open till 2 am (Another breakfast shop was about to open for business when I left); three tailor shops; five grocers, two of them are also herbal medicine shops; one part-time clinic; and one barber shop. In addition to these businesses that have a permanent location, there are temporary stalls that provide services only during the early morning marketing hours: two vegetable and meat make-shift stalls, and one pork vendor. Together, they provide all the essential fresh food stuff for daily consumption. I guess one can live near Nan Mei and obtain everything from local shops, from chicken feed to construction materials, from baby formula to burial equipment (from Sa Le), without ever leaving the local community.

Times have changed, as everyone seems to acknowledge. With education, young residents beyond elementary school age have to leave the local community for the city of Malacca to obtain post elementary education. With buses, cars and motorcycles and easy

access roads, villagers venture into larger market towns and the city of Malacca visiting shops with more variety and better prices. With out-migrating youngsters and relatives working in big cities, residents travel to Kuala Lumpur or even Singapore to shop. Neighbors and residents alike are less content with the small market town and its services. The pekan as a service center is being phased out regardless of the government's intended effort at rural industrialization.

Emic View of Social Boundaries

How do the villagers view the local community, and how does it differ from wider society? How is the local community organized? Here the traditional dichotomy of "we" and "they" seems obvious but with greater fluidity. I am arguing that the "we" concept among the rural Chinese is based on a concept that stems from the idea of shared descent.

Large descent-based social units have not been found in rural Chinese communities. The basic descent unit is the jia. Freedman's suggestion (1953) that immigration to the Nanyang has been individualistic in nature, thus not conducive to the formation of large formal descent group is valid in Malaysia. Even though some individuals have gone back to home villages in China to recruit relatives, such as the case in Sa Le during

the pioneer stage, most residents in rural Chinese settlements are agnatically related only in a loose sense: they came from the same home village, share the same surname and place of origin, and speak the same dialect. Possible distant common ancestry is often discussed and a sense of relatedness is reinforced. But in terms of common ritual activities, internal stratification, and shared rights and obligations, which anthropologists emphasize heavily as being the essence of the Chinese agnatic lineage system and the basis of Chinese social organization (Freedman 1958; 1966; Potter 1970), these do not seem to have been transplanted to rural Chinese communities in Malacca.

Besides the individualistic nature of immigration, the formation of the New Village created added diversity among local residents. In addition, the wage economy and limited land base encourage geographic mobility. Consequently, second generation Chinese often leave their home village as soon as they can find employment elsewhere, provided their parents' vegetable farm or jia petty business does not require their labor contribution. Some of these out-migrants settle in other part of the country, some eventually return to the home village to take over their parents' occupation. Many view the village home as a base, to seek refuge temporarily when the employment situation is unfavorable

in the cities, and to leave when other opportunities arise. Because of such ease of mobility, populations of the local community, and the number of people residing in each _jia_ home fluctuate according to the life cycle of the individual and the _jia_ group, and the ups and downs of the market economy.

The _jia_ is the descent group in the Chinese rural community. The Lee _jia_ at Huang Jia Shan serves as an example. Mr. and Mrs. Lee Jie Fu were both vegetable farmers at Huang Jia Shan. Mr. Lee's father came from China, and worked in the Japanese Village during the 1940s. He was able to have a plot of land and continue farming after the Japanese left. Old Lee's wife died early, and he had to raise the only son by himself. Old Lee used to carry two baskets about three-feet in diameter on the two ends of a bamboo pole, and walk to the markets two to three miles away on days when vegetables were harvested. In one basket, he carried the produce, the other the son. On his way back, the emptied vegetable basket would be filled with daily essentials and other dry goods for home consumption. As Mr. Lee recalls, his father raised him alone. Later, the father and the son worked together on a two acre TOL (Temporary Occupation License) land to grow vegetables. Mr. Lee had only one year of formal education.

Mrs. Lee recalled that her marriage to Mr. Lee was arranged by her father through a matchmaker. Apparently, her mother had never been to Mr. Lee's house and never knew the economic condition of the Lee _jia_ her daughter was to marry into. When her mother visited her three days after she was married, the mother wept when she saw the old atap house with pounded yellow earthen floor. "There wasn't even an extra bowl that a guest could use."

Mr. and Mrs. Lee have seven children. Their first born was a daughter, and Old Lee wanted to give the first granddaughter away for adoption. Mrs. Lee must have begged because the girl stayed. Today, Mrs. Lee is grateful that the daughter was not given away for she is her only daughter, and has been a great help in taking care of the other six male siblings. The daughter married a young man who works at the factories nearby after she turned 30, and still comes back to help her mother who is suffering from rheumatism.

During the expansion stage of the _jia_ development, the Lee _jia_ consisted of the grandfather (Old Lee), Mr. and Mrs. Lee, and the seven children. The whole _jia_ lived together and worked together to produce vegetables for the market. When the children were about six years old, they started helping by doing weeding on the farm. There is always something to be done as all

farmers would say. The farm was never mechanized. In early days, Mrs. Lee said they planted one season of wet rice for home consumption. The rest of the year, they planted different kinds of vegetables. Plowing, making bunds, fertilizing, and harvesting were all carried out by hand. Later on, only vegetables were planted because it was more profitable to plant vegetables and buy rice from the market. Mrs. Lee left her young children at home for her daughter to take care of when she worked on the farm. Later her father-in-law would stay at home to mind the babies while her daughter worked on the farm to meet the labor requirement. Mrs. Lee said she always kept her ears open when she worked on the farm just across from her humble home in case the babies needed her. In the late seventies, the price of vegetables was good, and the Lees had six able bodies to work the farm. They employed Malay neighbors from the surrounding villages to help during busy times. In the tropics, there is little seasonal change except during the time of monsoon rains around September and October, and the dry spells around January and February just before the Chinese New Year. The family never had a resting period all year round. But they did make money. The Lees renovated their atap house. It now looks like the rest of the village, a typical Chinese rural home that stands on solid ground. The children all went to school, with

the exception of the daughter who stopped at Standard Six (primary school education), and the first son who quit school after seven years of formal education. The rest all went on to finish Form Five (equivalent to 11 or 12 years of education). Some even finished college, a rare case at Huang Jia Shan.

Now in their mid 50s, Mr. Lee and Mrs. Lee are retired from farming. Their farm has long been water-logged and has not been worked for about 10 years. Five of their six male children are in the city. The daughter married and is living in the nearby housing estate where she had once worked as a construction laborer some ten years ago. The first son works as an assistant manager at his maternal uncle's business near Kuala Lumpur. He is not married yet, but he has decided that the woman he marries must agree to live with his parents and take care of them. He plans on an eventual return to his village home. The second son married and bought a home near Kuala Lumpur. He also works with his maternal uncle and has a majority share in a restaurant they set up. He lives with his wife in Kuala Lumpur, and sends their daughter to Mrs. Lee to look after. The third son is working with a construction company and is stationed in Kuala Lumpur. He sent his wife and children to his parents in Huang Jia Shan. The young wife lives with Mr. and Mrs. Lee and takes care of the daily household

chores. The fourth son works in northern Borneo as a chef, and was dating a young woman from the city of Malacca who openly declared that when she marries she would not live with her in-laws. The fifth son works for the same maternal uncle in Kuala Lumpur. The sixth son was living at home and studying to go to college. The last I heard, he left home and was also working for the maternal uncle on yet another business project.

(DIAGRAM 2)

Here is a Malaysian Chinese jia that has a history of three generations living in Huang Jia Shan. The first generation consists of the pioneer Old Lee who came to Malaya with a relative to look for opportunities. He settled down in Huang Jia Shan and raised a family of one son. When the second generation, the only son, took over, the jia consisted of an atap house on a plot owned by the state, a plot of farm land which was leased by the state to him on yearly basis, and thirty ringgit cash from his father. Mrs. Lee relayed to me the story of the transfer of "jural rights" and "the jia estate." One day, her father-in-law put the thirty ringgit in front of his son and said, "Now you manage the jia." He formally retired from the manager's role then. There was no other "inheritance" to pass on, but the cash. Old Lee lived ten more years in the same house after that.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee lived on the land and raised seven children. They built the new house on the same site where the atap house once stood, and built six rooms under the new roof. All members lived under the same roof until education or employment lead them to other parts of the country.

Only the youngest son, the daughter-in-law of the third son and the two grandchildren by this son and daughter-in-law, and the daughter of the second son, live with them now. But Mrs. Lee was talking about adding another room to the back of the house, "so that when the sons all come back, they each would have a room to themselves and their family."

Financially, the Lees are not dependent on their children at the moment, though the mother does receive "pocket money" from the children whenever they visit home. The couple derives income from a small rubber holding they purchased about ten years ago, using the jia fund accumulated jointly by the parents and children. In addition to irregular visits, the Lees see their children during Chinese New Year, Qing Ming (the day to worship at the grave site), Duan Wu (beginning of summer), Qi Yue Ban (Ghost festival), Zhong Qiu (mid autumn festival), and weddings and funerals. They maintain a place for the deceased Old Lee and the grandmother on the altar, and their pictures on the living room wall. Their graves are

visited by all members during Qing Ming, which usually falls on April 5th every year.

The Lees have no other agnatic kin in Malaysia as Mr. Lee has no uncles or brothers. The Lees identify themselves closely with their immediate neighbor who is also a Lee originally from the same village in China. Mrs. Lee said during the Emergency period, her family had a house plot twice as big as the one they now have. The neighbor Lee lived in a shed in the middle of the vegetable field. The Emergency required relocation of scattered squatters to the general area where the Lees had lived. The Lees invited the other Lee family to live on their house plot. After the Emergency, the house plot was divided by the British and the neighbor Lee has occupied that house plot in a legitimate sense. Mrs. Lee wished she had a larger house lot for the expansion of her house. But, since the neighbor is ziji ren (our own people), there is not much to regret in that direction. Living on the other side of the Lee's home is another Hakka-speaking Lee. This third Lee family is not from the same home village, but speaks the same dialect and shares the same surname. They are also considered as ziji ren.

The Lees maintain an amiable relationship with the two neighbor Lee jia, and because of the close physical distance, they have daily contact. On hot

evenings, members of the three _jia_ sit outside the houses under one or two trees exchanging complaints. On rainy days when farming is temporarily stalled, they share borrowed videotapes to pass time. On special occasions such as weddings or funerals, they let the feast tent (pitched to protect the guests from the tropical sun or the sudden rain) extend into each other's front yard. Since they all have lived at the same houses for at least thirty years, they watched each _jia_ grow and have seen all the conflicts and shared all the gossip.

The Lees also retain a close relationship with Mrs. Lee's natal _jia_, the Wus of a Chinese settlement about 13 miles away. Mrs. Lee, being the most senior in terms of birth order of the Wu _jia_, and, having raised all the younger sisters and brothers, resumed a mother's position after their own mother died twenty-five years ago. After her father passed away about ten years ago, she was the matron to the Wu _jia_, even though she had long been a Lee. Her brothers consulted her regarding wedding plans, and funeral arrangements. All her younger brothers and their families visit her house on the second day of the Chinese New Year, just like married daughters would do, going back to visit their mother's house. Mrs. Lee has never been to school and is illiterate. But she commands a position based on seniority, and perhaps personality.

Mrs. Lee identified for me two other jia in the same community that she calls ziji ren. There is a man with the same surname of Wu living on the other end of the community. Mrs. Lee said he is a ziji ren laide (our own people) because he shares the same ancestor, tong yige zuzong. She neither knew the exact shared genealogy, nor was very close to this relative and his jia. One other ziji ren was her mother's paternal (the Lus) cousin sister's daughter (mama tangjiede nur), who she calls biaojie, one of the only three Lu jia relatives remaining in Malaysia. These two relatives and their jia are within five minutes walking distance from her home, but she has limited contact with both of them.

The Lees seem to be emotionally closer to Mrs. Lee's natal jia. Their relation with the Wu jia became even more intense since one of the maternal uncles living and working in the capital city hired three of the six nephews. It was lucky that the Lees have six sons, not six daughters. Nieces may not be as lucky in obtaining jobs from the maternal uncle, as the type of jobs are said to be most suitable for males.

The Lees maintain amiable relations with all the neighbors. They know every single jia in the village after living there for more than 30 years. Mr. Lee is active in local politics. He is an active member of the Chinese elementary school PTA, a member of the local

Chinese school board, a state appointed member of the New Village JKKK (New Village Development and Security Office) serving the second term, and a member of the local branch of the MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association).

The Wu jia is outside the geographic area of the local community. Outside the village, the Lees also have affinal ties with three other jia through the two daughters-in-law and one son-in-law.

It is difficult for an outsider to compare and judge the intensity of social contacts the Lees have with their neighbors, with their extended patrilineal neighbors, with the matrilateral relatives, and their affinal relatives. One thing clear to the Lees is that regardless of the ziji ren status the two neighbor Lee jia have, they have no shared rituals, either at home or at the graves. They participate in one another's weddings and funerals as guests, not as jia members, or even relatives. On the other hand, Mrs. Lee and her jia have been a part of the rituals in her natal Wu jia. When Mrs. Lee's father died, Mrs. Lee went back to the Wu house and was the loudest and saddest wailer at her father's coffin side. She went to the cemetery to watch the coffin lowered to the grave trench, and received blessing from her father by way of receiving the ritual rice the priest-monk threw over the grave to the offspring at the grave site. This ritual rice was

brought back home and mixed with the rice to cook dinner. Supposedly, those who eat it will share the blessing. Local people call the benefit hao, which literally means good.

If rituals define and reinforce membership, and mourning dress and color declare rights and obligations of a member in a group (Wolf 1970:196; Newell 1962:217-223), we can say that from Mr. and Mrs. Lee's stand point, the Lees have an affinal relation that is more formalized and group activity oriented. Relationship with the other two Lee jia are based on an extension of the patrilineal ideology, but is not formalized. Other relationships with the neighbors are individualized, and informal. Political ties with committees and meetings, though formalized and group oriented, are based on relationship other than kinship.

On local level, most jia follow a similar course of jia development as the Lees at Huang Jia Shan. Their definitions of the jia and ziji ren are very similar to that described in the Lees' case. Their social relationships and social boundaries follow a general pattern not too different from that of the Lees. Mrs. Lee's natal jia, the Wu jia, for instance, differs from the Lee jia only in that the number of patrilineal kin outweighs affinal kin.

It seems safe to suggest that the much discussed patrilineal descent based social organization is observed in Chinese rural communities only in the _jia_. Beyond the _jia_, on community level, social relationships are organized based on affinal, and neighborhood sentiments. This observation reconfirms the conclusions of Gallin (1960) and Pasternak (1972) who studied multisurname communities in Taiwan. Freedman suggested in his 1953 Singapore study that a bilateral kinship system similar to that of the Malay kinship seems to develop among the Chinese in Singapore. The _ziji ren_ (our own people) concept of the local residents appears to point to that direction. Examples above have shown that from the ego's standpoint, affinal kinship relationships appear to be as important as patrilineal relationships. Whether increasing importance of affinal kinship relations has begun to threaten the patrilineal descent ideology remains to be seen.

As anthropologists gain more understanding of Chinese social organization, it becomes more difficult to make generalizations. From the results of his study in Singapore, Freedman stated that the localized lineage was not reproduced in Singapore (1953:73); and suggested that the kinship arrangement at home could not be reproduced overseas (1960:44). A more recent study by Moese _et. al._ suggested that lineage organization did occur in urban

Penang, and some of these lineage organizations later extended to include non-lineage and non-clan members (1979:247). My observation at local Chinese villages in Malacca shows that some family groups initially did attempt to maintain a larger jia group, modeled after the homeland, but the external social and economic factors prevented its expansion after only one generation. The Tay jia in Jin Cun, about six miles from the city of Malacca, can serve as an example.

The Tay jia established a comparatively large land base in Jin Cun Village. When the founder Tay was alive, he had absolute control of the jia, which consisted of he and his wife, three male children and their families living under one roof, sharing the same stove and water well. I was told that during Chinese New Year, Old Tay would personally select material from town to give to daughters-in-law to make new clothes. He gave money to his daughters-in-law to have a hair permanent in town, and would collect the change from them when they returned. Jia farming was organized by him, and everyone had a fixed work schedule to follow. Before he died, fraternal conflicts and crowding of the old home forced Old Tay to agree that two other structures be erected side by side next to the old house. The jia was informally divided into three households, with each son and his family having his own house in the same general

compound. Above the doorway of each house, a plaque with the code name of the household was displayed. The old man specified that the land holdings, which included both farm land and rubber plantations, should never be divided, to ensure that the Tay _jia_ remains as a group.

Even to this date, the three brothers and their wives live in the same compound. But their children are more dispersed, having received education and obtained wage employment in the cities. As long as the three brothers live, an estate will be intact, and common worship of immediate ancestors will continue. Whether such collective effort and collective property holding can extend beyond the present generation is doubtful. Rumor has it that the state government intends to purchase the land area that belongs to the Tay _jia_, to develop a new housing project. Letting the _jia_ estate go is an imminent probability.

Examples such as the Tay incipient "lineage" must be numerous. But they are definitely uncommon in the New Villages I studied. There are a couple of families at _pekan_ Nan Mei that resemble the Tays described above. Like the Tay _jia_, the extended _jia_ group may not be able to outlive the second generation. Attempts may have been made to follow a traditional model of enlarged localized descent group. But external social and economic conditions do not allow the traditional norms to be reproduced.

Social Construct of the Kindred

Freedman stated that due to the shallowness in generation and the individualistic nature of immigration to Singapore, "an individual is likely to have few close patrilineal kin in the colony" (1953:73). This statement is borne out by the example of the Lees of Huang Jia Shan given in the last section. Freedman also reported that the local kindred in Singapore is of the same nature as the bilateral (or cognatic) systems of the non-matrilineal Malays in Malaya (1953:80). The Lees have a kindred that includes both Mr. Lee's relatives and Mrs. Lee's relatives. Due to the small numbers of Mr. Lee's kin, the Lees have more frequent contacts with Mrs. Lee's relatives. From Mrs. Lee's standpoint, she recognizes both her father's kin (of the Wu surname) and her mother's kin (of the Lu surname, her mother married into the Lu jia and became a member of the Lu jia). All these relatives Mrs. Lee calls ziji ren. Freedman in his analysis included the matrilateral kin as kindred. Mrs. Lee does not have any known relative of her mother's natal jia in Malaysia. The last known persons from her mother's mother's natal jia left Malaya to return to China, and died on the journey.

Using Freedman's definition, a kindred is the total range of consanguineal and affinal kin from an individual's point of view (1953:72). Unlike the descent

group, the kindred is a social construct which lacks the jural aspects of the agnatic kinship relationship. A kindred is not a corporate group. Its boundary is fluid, and the grouping is an open system. While the patrilineal, matrilateral bias remains, the actual make up of the kindred in the Malaysian context is also determined by other factors related to being immigrants in Malaysia.

There are several local expressions that denote relatedness: Freedman mentioned chhin-lang (Hokkien dialect, meaning co-member of a clan), chhin-chhek (kindred), and chhin-chia (affine) (1953:70-73). More generalized terms mentioned in the literature include the following: Strauch recorded the term ngodeih jigei yahn (Cantonese dialect, meaning our own people) (1983:24); Gonzalez recorded the term zijia (Southeastern China, own family) (1983:86); Cohen mentioned t'oung-ka ngin (Hakka, people of the same chia) (1970:22; 1976:58). At Nan Mei and Huang Jia Shan, the term ziji ren (Mandarin, our own people) was often heard used by residents.

These terms may have at one time or in specific situations more definite meaning, classifying people into "we" and "they" categories. In the Nanyang, however, we see a generalization of these terms. Freedman described two incidents when the chhin-lang relationship was exploited in order to get a shopkeeper surnamed Li to

help out a medicine seller surnamed Li, and to get a Dr. Ng to help a man also surnamed Ng who was suddenly taken very sick. "...tell him one of his chhin-lang is ill" (Freedman 1953:70). T'ien in his monograph on the Chinese of Sarawak also documented how sharing the same surname facilitated his ethnographic work among "kinsmen." He called it "surname bond," and described how a constrained politeness was dropped and he was immediately treated as "members of the family" when the sentiment of common surname was evoked (T'ien 1953:21-22). Such generalized principle of shared ancestry has been illustrated in the analysis of Surname Associations and Territorial Associations in Freedman (1958) and T'ien (1957). The flexibility of definitional boundary is highly adaptive in the Chinese community.

In the three New Villages, sharing the same surname, coming from the same place in China, speaking the same dialect (or even better, speaking the same subdialect of a main dialect), all evoke a sentiment of presumed common ancestry. In addition to assumed ancestry, a generalized kindred sentiment also becomes the binding force in the Chinese rural community. The expression of ziji ren is such an emic expression based on some forms of relatedness shared by people. It has been found used exclusively to refer to only people whose relatedness can be demonstrated, such as the way Mrs. Lee

was heard using. It has also been observed as a term used inclusively in varying degree.

When I first came to Nan Mei, I introduced myself to the Chinese ketua kampong (the headman), Mr. Chow. As soon as I mentioned that I was related to his acquaintance, Mr. Wo, the headmaster of a nearby elementary school, Mr. Chow took me in without questions. When he later found out that I was the affinal sister-in-law of a local resident, Mr. Yap, he said that "ah, you are a ziji ren," and began introducing me to all Nan Mei people as a ziji ren, our own people.

Mr. Chow is the ritual foster father of my affinal brother-in-law's elder brother's son (jiefu dagede rzi). Mr. Chow and I become therefore kindred in a sense. A few days later, a young woman of Nan Mei, Mrs. Huang, after meeting me went back to talk to her own mother. She later approached me and told me, "Actually, we are ziji ren (qishi women shi ziji ren)." She explained to me that one of her older sisters married my husband's paternal older cousin sister's son (tangjiede rzi). These relationships qualify me as affinal kin to Mr. Yap and his brothers (there are two more Yaps at Nan Mei), affinal kin to Mr. Chow, and affinal kin to Mrs. Huang. These may all sound like an anthropological myth and can be very confusing, but the relationship is very real. Once the "connection" (guanxi) is established, the

kindred relationship becomes a reality.

(DIAGRAM 3)

(DIAGRAM 4)

Being a ziji ren, a reciprocal obligation is recognized. I became a trusted insider during my stay at the village. As an insider, I was obliged to be loyal to all my ziji ren. In fact, my obligations are not restricted to Mrs. Huang, the three Yaps, and Mr. Chow. My ziji ren status extends to their jia members. Through these ziji ren relationships, I was recognized as a ziji ren to Nan Mei. To people outside Nan Mei, I became part of Nan Mei. Mr. Chow, in the capacity of the village headman, told people from Sa Le, a village one mile away, that they could trust me as a ziji ren, because I was part of his community (ta shi ziji ren laide).

The social construct of the ziji ren, thus, is fluid and open to reinterpretation depending on the situation. It can be exclusive, at times it can be inclusive, to allow the recognition of all persons who share reciprocal relationship with the ego. Mrs. Shaw, the wife of a grocery keeper at Nan Mei, once called me a ziji ren. She explained to me that many years ago, my late mother-in-law visited Nan Mei and they often talked. Although I never met my own mother-in-law, my late mother-in-law's acquaintance Mrs. Shaw has accepted me as a ziji ren based on a rather intangible relation: I being

a member of the jia of her acquaintance who spoke the same Hakka subdialect.

The cohesiveness of the community as a whole remains elusive. Theoretically, by extension of the descent and kindred concepts, all Nan Mei or Huang Jia Shan residents should be ziji ren. They would form a collective local kindred group. But such sentiment has not been commonly observed. For example, Nan Mei residents do not feel such a kindred group is real. Perhaps it is because Nan Mei is not a closed village, all Nan Mei residents have their own kindred within and without the community. Nan Mei does not stand alone as a political unit. Even though the local branch of the MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association) is located at pekan Nan Mei, membership extends to Sa Le and the surrounding areas. In addition, Nan Mei has not had the opportunity to demonstrate community solidarity against a "predatory" outside party.

Although not every one shares the spirit of community solidarity, there are people who are closer to one another than other people. Marriage and fictive kinship ties are two of the observed ways to build up connections beyond kindred ties within the community.

The rule of exogamous marriage is observed by the rural Chinese. But the Malaccan rural Chinese communities are multi-surnamed, and even same surname

people may originate from different localities in China. Marriage between members within the community is therefore not uncommon. At Nan Mei, of the 51 households surveyed, 21 have affinal ties within the community, involving 13 exchanges of daughters or sisters. Fifteen households are agnatically related, belonging to six former descent based jia groups. Seven of the 51 households have both agnatic and affinal ties within the Nan Mei community. These ties help solidify relationships between and among individual jia, but they have not helped strengthen the power of one jia over the other. This can be attributed to the fact that the jia as a descent group is not territory bound; patrilocal residence is not practiced in a rigid sense here. Marriage on the one hand creates a stronger tie between jia groups, it also foreshadows the breaking away physically of a sub-jia from the original. The son brings in a wife, but at certain point in time moves to a separate location to establish his neolocal residence. As a result, a hegemonic power structure within the community has not been able to develop.

The jia group that has the most number of connection links within the community is that of the Yaps. Mr. Yap A Sin is the eldest of four brothers. They came to Nan Mei with their father before the Japanese Occupation of Malaya (1942-45). The jia had

accumulated some property before the death of the father, and Mr. Yap A Sin inherited the medicine shop from his father. Two other brothers and their families live at Nan Mei, in separate houses. They moved out of the original Yap house after they had the means to acquire a separate residence to accommodate the increasing number of children in each family. Eldest Yap has 12, the second Yap has 8, and the third Yap has 5. The fourth Yap does not live at Nan Mei. All the Yaps worship their immediate ancestors as a group at the original home which the oldest brother, Mr. Yap A Sin, occupies. Otherwise, they maintain their own economic activities at different locations. Mr. Yap A Sin has two married daughters within Nan Mei. Mr. Yap's youngest sister also married within Nan Mei and lives nearby. Even with the two agnatic ties with his two brothers, and three affinal ties with three jia at Nan Mei, Mr. Yap has not become the elder of the jia. He does not command power economically, politically, or ritually over the other jia, nor over his own Yap jia. In fact, it has been his explosive temperament and his success in business that have gained reputation and social status for him. He was elected the luzhu (holder of the incense burner) of the nearby Hainanese shrine for the past year, and was one of the dongshi (board member) of the local Chinese elementary school. He donates money to local schools and

temples, and has his name and picture hung on the walls of the organizations where his money was donated. That was probably as far as his influence could go.

(DIAGRAM 5)

Fictive or ritual kin relation is another method local people adopt to formalize connections and solidify relationships. More often than not, the established tie is limited in its scope of influence, and the intended joint solidarity tends to diminish over time. Mr. Chow of Nan Mei once adopted eldest Mr. Yap's son, not as a Chow, but as a foster son, to foster relationship between the two fathers. Freedman and Newell both have discussed this relationship in the past (Freedman 1953:67; Newell 1962:54). Mr. Chow used to buy presents for his foster son annually, as a token gesture to reinforce the token relationship. This practice has gradually lagged, and the fictive relation diminished. Perhaps it signifies a deteriorating relationship between the two jia, based on the fact that the relationship between the two men, who both command great respect from the local community, has been one of alliance-competition.

Another way to establish fictive kin relation is ritual brother or sisterhood, perhaps the same principle that underlies the initiation ceremony of the secret society (Vaughan 1879; Comber 1957, 1959; Freedman 1960;

Suyama 1962; Wong 1966; Blythe 1969). At Nan Mei, Lan Gu (Yap A Loi's wife) and Mrs. Chu are neighbors and have been good friends for years. At the suggestion of Mrs. Chu, they went to a temple to perform a ritual in front of the temple deity to become ritual sisters. The advantage of such fictive kin relationship, according to Lan Gu, is to "duo yige qinren (have an additional kin)." Lan Gu in fact prefers the neighboring relationship better, and finds the ritual sisterhood not so meaningful. In addition, it is a relationship that seems to end at a personal level. The Yaps and the Chus are still neighbors, not relatives.

It seems safe to conclude at this juncture that the non-descent based relationship, though possessing the necessary ingredients of mutual obligatory reciprocal relationship, as if the participants were in fact related consanguinally or affinally, does not have the same binding power as descent ties. It does not outlive the enthusiasm or the motive behind the tie. Descent based ties, on the other hand, do not diminish easily because they contain a necessary and sufficient ingredient, that is, mutual social obligation only exists among jia members.

Descent Ideology Based Organization Beyond the Jia

Sinologists recorded the importance of "voluntary associations" during the early days of immigration (T'ien 1953 in Sarawak; Freedman 1953 in Singapore; Crissman 1967 for urban overseas Chinese communities, Skinner 1957 for Thailand; Moese et. al. 1979 in West Malaysia). What were the organizing principles behind these voluntary associations?

Freedman identified like origin and territorial principle as present in both clan associations and territorial associations (1953:93). A third organizing principle, agnatic ideology, is more tied to clan associations than territorial groups (p.98). T'ien stated that the social bond that was found in China, a bond based on blood and neighborhood, was also found in overseas Chinese society in Sarawak. In Sarawak, voluntary associations were formed in the name of same neighborhood, clanship, and occupation identification. In both rural and urban economy, clanship was underlying all socio-economic relationships. In rural Sarawak, social relations were based mainly on the framework of kinship bond (T'ien 1957:38, 19, 17, 20, 45). Crissman suggested that descent, locality, and occupation, the same principles that organize Chinese in China, are also used to order Chinese societies overseas (1967:203). Watson considered the common surname associations (or

clanship by T'ien and Freedman) as established by individuals who "seek to create the conditions of agnatic kinship" (1982:610-11).

Most scholars would agree that traditional ideology underlies Chinese social organization in overseas conditions. The way Chinese organize themselves overseas is an adaptive response of the immigrant Chinese to a new environment where social, economic, and political support are lacking. New social organizations in the overseas communities are created based on the cultural principles known to these pioneer immigrants.

These interpretations of social organization in overseas societies were challenged by Sangren. He posed the question that kinship and lineage organizations exist in many societies, but only the Chinese organized voluntary associations. Therefore, the "extension thesis" that Freedman and Crissman suggested are not sufficient to explain the forms and functions of <u>hui</u> (associations). Sangren suggested looking at "operational norms," i.e., "cultural premises that inform social action but are so taken for granted that conscious ideological elaboration is unnecessary" (Sangren 1984:410, footnote 19). He proposed that "it is more the experience of creating and participating in groups," not the "acknowledgement of particularistic ties" that accounts for the Chinese talent in adaptive response to

diverse environments (p.409).

While Sangren attempted to seek an underlying principle that would explain the formation of groupings in general, he could not convincingly refute the fact that for the overseas Chinese, new social organizations found in Southeast Asian societies all have traditional bases (T'ien 1953; Freedman 1957; Moese et. al. 1979; Watson 1982; Pasternak 1985). Other factors Sangren failed to identify are the social, political and economic conditions of the host countries overseas, and the original intent of Chinese immigration. The response to organize and the formation of groupings in general may be universal. But the way the Chinese organize themselves is shaped culturally. These voluntary associations offered important mutual assistance to immigrants in an organized manner.

Voluntary Association

Studies in the 1950s of overseas Chinese societies reported the significance of hui (voluntary associations) in organizing and solidifying new immigrants in Sarawak and Singapore. Although hui still exist today, they seem to have lost their previous prominent place in rural residents' life. According to Moese et. al.'s study, in the late 1970s in Malacca, few huis were still active. There are the "landsmannschaft," or territorial/dialect associations, e.g., the Huizhou

Huiguan (Association of the Hakka speakers of the Huizhou Fu region in China. This organization has a history of nearly 180 years.) Four such huiguan were recorded by Moese et. al. (1979:193-197). A second type of association is same surname organizations, or clan associations. Today, most clan associations are open to members sharing the same surname regardless of dialect groups and place of origin, e.g., Leeshi Zongci (The Lee Surname Association). The third type of social grouping is the religious temple association. Mention of occupational associations and political associations is also made by Moese et. al. All these voluntary organizations are above village level and across community boundaries.

When asked about organizations beyond the jia, most of my informants show little enthusiasm. Some older members talked about a local hong zhu hui, an organized body that collects a few ringgits (Malaysian dollars) from all its members to assist in the funeral expenses of any deceased member. It was not clear if such hong zhu hui was part of a higher level territorial association, such as the Huizhou Huiguan, or a temple subcommittee, that carries out a mutual assistance program. Such activity was part of the responsibilitie of a lineage organization in China.

The territorial/dialect associations and the common surname associations have their headquarters outside the village, usually in the city of Malacca. They are attended by some of the villagers but are not an essential part of villagers' life. Exceptions include special occasions such as birthdays and funerals of prominent village members, when the huiquan as a group representing its members takes part in the birthday celebration or funeral procession. Most participating village members usually maintain only a nominal membership for purposes such as scholarships for the children. My host at Nan Mei belongs to the Huizhou Huiquan. But he admitted that he had not been an active member in any sense. One evening I heard my host saying to his wife, "I'd better attend the dinner meeting and pay the membership fees. Otherwise, people would say our children receive scholarships but we don't participate in the organizational activities. Buhao yisi la (It is embarrassing)." One young mother at Huang Jia Shan said her father-in-law, a Lee, is a member of the Lee Common Surname Association. She did not know much about the activities, only said, "it meets annually and offers scholarships." Territorial/dialect associations, their functions, and their organizational structures have been well documented in Moese et. al. (1979).

Since the Chinese have become integrated into the political, educational, and economic institutions of the wider Malaysian society, the needs early Chinese immigrants faced in overseas societies to organize themselves and seek mutual support have been fulfilled by various social political institutions on the national or state level. Voluntary associations have lost their initial functions. Today, voluntary associations are reduced to social clubs that serve limited social functions. This supports the adaptive analysis of the voluntary associations in overseas societies. When institutions lose their initial functional values, they tend to evolve into bodies of lesser significance or of a very different nature to meet new needs. In the rural Chinese communities, some people maintain a membership in order to qualify for scholarships for their children. Some use the association as a place to rally support for political offices in state or national level elections. Such support calls for the recognition of "shared origin," be it presumed common descent, or simply being Chinese.

Higher level social organizations that still hold relatively important place among most of the villagers are temple organizations and political parties. The former has roots in the Chinese cultural tradition; the political parties are part of the Malaysian political

system on a local level.

The political parties seem to be more closely related to the villagers' life in relation to wider Malaysian society, especially in 1986 when the New Village land grant issue became part of national election issues. Political parties are formally organized and hold regular meetings at centralized locations at Nan Mei and at Huang Jia Shan. In fact, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) has offices at local grass roots levels, especially in the New Villages where the rural Chinese are concentrated. The New Village has its own political structure, the JKKK (New Village Development and Security Office). Huang Jia Shan has its own JKKK. Nan Mei and Sa Le form one JKKK. According to Huang Jia Shan JKKK representatives, members who are active in MCA are also JKKK representatives. The overlapping membership in both political structures indicates the overlapping interest of local level leadership. Strauch studied local-level politics in a New Village in Perak, and presented her analysis in her 1975 dissertation (Strauch 1975;1981). As political organization is beyond the thesis of descent ideology, I will not go into detail here.

On the surface, temple organizations do not seem to be related to kinship ideology. Moese _et_. _al_., on the other hand, suggested that temple organizations were

initially organized on the same principles that led to the establishment of territorial associations. Deities and gods can be region-specific. For instance, Shuiwei Shengmu, the deity who protects the seamen, fishermen and travellers, is associated with the Hainanese. Often, early immigrants from China brought along their protective deity on the journey. When arriving safely, the bearers of the deity, or a group of patrons, would build a shrine for the deity in return for protection. The shrine or the temple served as the place for prayers, but also the place for people of the same origin, be it dialect group or territorial group, to assemble and seek mutual support. Temple organizations grow out of such an assembly of same dialect or same territory devotees. Moese et. al. cited Zhu that these temples developed earlier than the 'landsmannschaften' and assumed their duties (1979:349).

In Malacca, the oldest organized institution is Qingyun Ting (Blue Cloud Temple), a Buddhist temple, renowned for the power of its Guan Yin, Goddess of Mercy. Qingyun Ting is the oldest temple in Malaysia. It was probably founded in 1673, whereas the earliest huiguan, 'landsmannschaft,' in Malacca was established in 1805. The temple was the center of the Chinese community during the Dutch colonial time. "Kapitan China" maintained his seat of office in Qingyun Ting. In 1824 the British

seized Malacca and abolished the Kapitan China system. In the following period, the chosen master of the Qingyun Ting, the tingzhu, was considered the highest-ranking representative of the Chinese in Malacca (Moese et. al. 1979:350-51). The elected tingzhu continued to be the leader of this self-governing body using the belief system as the organizing theme. According to Luo, the Blue Cloud Temple represented the Hokkien, while another temple, San Duo Miao, represented the Cantonese. The former became a religious temple after 1951 when the secular aspect of the temple, the tingzhu system was abolished (1985:197).

Today, temples and temple organizations are more sacred than secular, and are attended by patrons across community boundaries. Like other voluntary associations, temple organizations no longer serve political or economic functions. As most rural Chinese are still closely identified with the traditional belief system, temple organizations are more related to individual villagers' life.

Temples are not centers of organized activities on daily basis, and visits to the temple are individualistic. But the temple organizations are a social institution that loosely bind the wider Chinese community. The local Chinese do not identify themselves as followers of one particular deity or a temple. On the

other hand, annual temple celebrations, shen dan (birthdays of the deity), do draw devotees of similar faith together. Once or twice a year, celebrations bring in donations from devotees that help replenish the temple finances fund. The occasions often are accompanied by theatrical performances for the deities to watch and for the devotees to enjoy. These are also the days when new temple trustees and luzhu are re-elected. Unlike huiguan or like voluntary organizations, temple organizations are no longer involved in secular activities such as scholarship, education, and funeral support, though some temples do rent furniture to members when community people need tables and chairs for wedding or funeral feasts at individual's homes. Temples own furniture for their own celebration feasts.

As mentioned earlier, local temples and shrines may be erected by local residents. Membership, however, is not confined to local residents. In Huang Jia Shan, a local shrine worshiping the Goddess of Mercy and six other deities has existed for nearly 100 years. Devotees came from as far as 14 miles away. Membership is voluntary, based on faith in the power of the resident deities. Remedies prescribed by the shrine resident assistant were brought to devotees miles away to cure illness and to ward off evil spirits. Annual celebrations bring devotees from miles away to enjoy the

feasts, the theatrical performances, as well as to pay back any vow they made.

Like voluntary associations, religious organizations cross community boundaries. Certain deities and gods may have been the patron gods of people of particular locations in China, but here they are worshipped by all Chinese regardless of surname or territrial/dialectal differences. Some native Malay traditional deities have also been adopted into the Chinese belief system. The local territorial spirit, nenek (grandmother, honorific old lady) Sri Bunvyinian, a Malay spirit, is worshiped side by side with the Chinese territorial deity, Da Bo Gong, and the Malay territorial spirit Datuk batu (stone gods) at the local temple near Nan Mei. Local Chinese and Malays alike seek cures and assistance from these cross-ethnic deities.

Over time, regional differences and group preferences concerning deities have diminished. While voluntary associations extend their membership to a wider group of people sharing presumed descent, religious organizations open up membership to all who share the same belief. In fact, many villagers are open to all deities and gods who would bestow blessing. I witnessed a Hindu religious procession one night when the statue of the Hindu deity was carried on a bullock cart on a pilgrimage in late April, 1986. When the procession

passed by onlookers at Huang Jia Shan, villagers lining the roadside offered "oil money" to the Hindu god. In return, they had an ash dot painted on their forehead.

To sum up, social boundaries at the community level are fluid. Descent based kinship relationship is most intense at the _jia_ level. Beyond the _jia_, the local kindred is one of the forces that organizes the community. The local kindred includes affinal kin in addition to patrilineal kin. Local kindred are not confined to the village community. Many villagers in fact have relatives living outside the local community.

An extension of this local kindred concept is noted. Residents have been observed to extend the concept of _ziji ren_ to non-community members with whom they are willing to share a reciprocal relationship. The practice of extending a traditional organizing principle to include a wider range of people was observed also in the voluntary associations during the pioneer stages of immigration to the _Nanyang_. The extension of the kindred concept is also seen in the practice of ritual adoption. These extended, more generalized relationships serve their purposes, but appear to be less enduring than relationships established on agnatic and affinal ties. Of all the ties, the patrilineal descent tie is the most binding, and it is ritually reinforced.

In addition to the kindred relationship, neighboring relationships, political organizations such as the MCA and JKKK, educational organizations such as the PTA and the school board all assert organizational forces on a level higher than the village community.

Of the organizations which used to organize the Chinese immigrant community, none have maintained their initial force and function. The huiguan and zongci serve limited charity purposes for their members. Villagers do not look to them for support other than obtaining scholarships, enlarging the size of their funeral processions, and for a few, rallying support for political campaigns.

CHAPTER VII

EXPRESSIONS OF THE DESCENT IDEOLOGY

The patrilineal descent-based social organization of the Chinese, according to Hu, can trace its origin to the tribal society of the pre-Shang dynasty (-1123B.C.) (1964:11). The ruling same surname group, tsu (or zu), in order to secure their control of the dynasty house, enfeoffed the ruler's relatives. These enfeoffed brought about a division of the ruling nobility. They formed their own relationship groups and used the territory name or an official title to designate their own noble subdivision. These early descent based groups probably practiced primogeniture. The eldest son of the eldest line descended from the founder inherited titles and property.

Some scholars, such as Hu (1948), Liu (1956), Hsu (1963) and Baker (1979) are of the opinion that the structure and the ideology of the tsu (or zu), the descent based formal social organization, grew out of the family, or more specifically, the joint family. The clan or lineage system was promoted by the literati-officials and encouraged by the state for the purposes of maintaining social order, unity, and teaching proper

conduct. The Confucian doctrine of filial piety and brotherly love is the essential underpinning of the behavioral principle. The rituals that reinforce the organization of the descent group represent the philosophy and rituals of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and folk religion.

It has also been suggested that the ideology of large formalized descent groups was upheld by the scholar-officials, and the lineage organization was best supported by wealth and property (Freedman 1958; Potter 1970). The poor, as soon as their financial situation improved, tended to emulate the wealthy and powerful scholar-officials (Hsu 1963:47; Stover 1974).

It has been suggested in the previous chapters that the only descent based social organization in rural Malacca is the jia. It is suggested that like the lineage organization, it is organized by the patrilineal descent ideology. The patrilineal descent ideology is expressed in the lineage system in the aspects of authority representations, corporate economic activities, and ritual activities. They have been succinctly described and analyzed in among others, Hu 1948 and Freedman 1958, 1966. In this chapter, I will describe in detail the expressions of the descent ideology in rural Malaysian Chinese jia. I will focus on how the ideology is expressed and what purpose it serves, in terms of

authority, economy, and rituals.

Supportive data are from the villages I visited and lived in, sometimes as a participant in the jia, other times as an observer. I would like to stress the fact that these villages are multi-surname, multi-dialect villages. Practices in various aspects of social life vary among dialect groups, and even within these groups. Thus generalization of certain practices to all rural Chinese in Malaysia can be shortsighted. As far as possible, examples are used to illustrate the fact that structurally and contentwise, the jia is the descent-based ideological unit. It has evolved in Malaysian rural communities for the past two or three generations and is still evolving.

Jia Authority

As a descent-based group, the jia is not an egalitarian entity. The roles of the members of the jia are generally sex and age determined. This hierarchical relation within the jia is not permanent. It changes as the jia develops.

Freedman suggested that there is a power structure in the Chinese family along the axes of father-son and husband-wife. The configurations of the power structure differ in families of different economic standing. In rich families, there is strong control of

sons by the father, resulting in competition; in poor families, the father-son control tends to be weaker, and the relation between the husband and the wife tends to be closer. Partition of the family is caused by change in relations in the family. It occurs due to death or incompetence of the father (1966:45ff).

Cohen's analysis followed the same vein. He discussed the roles of the jia authority in the conjugal family and the complex family organization. In the former, there is male dominance, yet responsibility is shared by the husband and the wife in varying degrees. In the latter, there is tension between the father authority and his coparcener. Cohen suggested that the transfer of the authority role is related to both the developmental cycle of the family and the role specialization of the members. As the structure of the family becomes more complex, the authority of the father weakens, and the competition among brothers increases. When the family divides, the authority role usually passes on to the eldest son (1976:142).

The role of the authority, which Cohen termed the family head (chia zhang), has three aspects: the financial manager, the redistributor, and the overall authority. The transfer of roles is related to retirement or competence. Cohen suggested that the first two roles are often obscured in the collective economy of

the complex household. The ceremonial role of the family head, on the other hand, can exist without the other two roles (1976:131ff). The notion of ceremonial role is also supported by data presented by Wang (1985:54-55). Both Freedman and Cohen agreed that the father is usually the family head who represents the family as a group.

In rural Malaccan Chinese jia, the term jia zhang is not generally used by the villagers. The person regarded as having the most respect and authority in the jia is the most senior, be it male or female. The person who is in charge of the financial management of the jia is usually the head producer. The person who performs the daily domestic ritual is usually the senior female. The chief persons who perform the funeral ritual and the grave side ritual are the senior son and the senior grandson. Representing the jia at formal meetings outside the jia is usually the financial manager, or the senior son if he becomes an important producer of the jia when the father retires. Representing the jia at neighboring local jia feasts and celebrations can be any member of the jia depending on the relationship of the host jia and the guest jia. In general, village children and adults unanimously regard the most senior person in the jia as the person with the highest position in the jia, with the most authority (quan) and the ability to make important decisions. Burial rituals, however, must

be formally performed by the senior males of two generations, if possible. Age and sex are still regarded as the organizing principles of jia internal and external relationships. Variations and exceptions exist, but they are observed largely within the domestic sphere.

Lee Long Jiu's jia of Huang Jia Shan is a stem family, consisting of a widowed mother in her seventies, Lee Long Jiu and his wife in their late forties, and their six children ranging in age from 27 to 13. In this Teochew speaking jia, the father Lee Long Jiu is the economic manager of the jia who supervises the vegetable farm, organizes the jia labor, controls the pooled income, and distributes the economic resources. Lee Long Jiu is also the ceremonial representative of the jia. He attends the village elementary school PTA and local branch MCA meetings, represents his jia in the state-wide Lee surname association in the city of Malacca, and he represents the jia at the temple organization. Lee Long Jiu sometimes likes to consider himself retired because he has two sons in their mid twenties working on the farm for him. He occasionally sends his eldest son to represent him at village meetings and functions.

(DIAGRAM 6)

Within the jia domestic domain, Long Jiu is the son of his mother. Grandmother Lee dictates every detail she observes within the jia, which includes household

expenses, the working habits and mannerisms of her son and her daughter-in-law, and those of the grandchildren. Lee Long Jiu was not embarrassed to tell people that he used to beat his wife for not obeying her mother-in-law. He told me, "Mother I have only one; wife I can purchase and change. If my wife is not willing to obey my mother, she can go home." Lee Long Jiu lets his sons find their own potential spouse. But he intervenes if the girl friend is not one he approves. When Lee Long Jiu found out that the girl his son was dating had previously dated an Indian man, and for some reasons had her name and picture printed in the local newspaper, he xeroxed the news paper and showed the picture and his dissatisfaction to almost everyone, including me. Friends and relatives are hesitant to act as matchmakers for his sons, for fear that they might inadvertently introduce a xifu (daughter-in-law) to Lee jia who disrespects the old grandmother Lee, and displeases the father Lee.

The Wan jia has a coffee shop at pekan Nan Mei. This Wan jia is Hainanese, with a widowed mother, one married son and his spouse and children, two unmarried sons and two unmarried daughters living together. The mother has four married out daughters and one son working in the capital city. Grandmother Wan, in her late fifties, just lost her husband. When I visited the Wan coffee shop and asked the oldest son, who with his wife

was cleaning up the tables of the jia business, if I could talk with him about his jia, he went to the back of the shop to ask his mother. Grandmother Wan talked to me "for the whole jia." Grandmother Wan supervises the business of the coffee shop, manages the income, and distributes resources. She speaks for the jia to outsiders.

Lee Long Jiu's sister married the eldest son of the Wu jia at Jin Cun, a Chinese village. The Wu jia speaks Hakka and was mentioned in the previous chapter. The Wu jia has a dispersed jia arrangement. The Wu primary jia lives in their old house built on rented land. Before the grandfather died, the primary jia consisted of grandfather Wu, his eldest son and his family of six, one of the unmarried sons, and a maternal great grand second mother (the second wife of the late maternal grandmother's father). Two married sons and their families lived outside of the state of Malacca. The jia income at that stage of jia development was not pooled in a general sense. Grandfather Wu in his late seventies was long retired. The eldest son's income supported the primary jia. All the sons gave "pocket money" to their father "to spend," and brought back gifts for the primary jia on each visit home.

(DIAGRAM 7)

The great grandmother was a Lu. Being on the maternal grandmother's side and in an inferior second wife position, even though the most senior in age, she had no jia related status in the Wu jia. Grandfather Wu had the most respect in the Wu jia. Everyone waited for him to begin the meal, no children or grandchild was allowed to disobey him. The eldest son was the financial manager of the jia. He took care of the expenses of daily living, annual rituals, and organized his brothers in jia related activities. Grandfather Wu, however, was the external representative and decision maker of the jia as a group. Perhaps because of his age, perhaps because of his competence, he was well respected by the villagers and the people in the wider Hakka speaking community. He went to temple organizations and huiguan meetings representing the jia; he gave consent and negotiated for the yet unmarried son's marriage; and he burnt the first stick of incense at jia ancestor worship rituals. When Grandfather Wu died, all these roles fell into the hands of the eldest son. The two sons living outside the jia home were their own family heads. Financially, these two sons and their neolocal families may even be better off than the eldest brother. But when they returned home, they submitted to their brother in a matter-of-fact manner. The dage (big brother) took command of all decisions relating to the jia as a group. He represented

all brothers and their families in _huiguan_ meetings. At the _Qing Ming_ grave side worship, he and his eldest son hold the first incense sticks.

The Lee Ah Siang's _jia_, a Hakka _jia_ at Huang Jia Shan, can be considered as of nuclear form still, though one of the daughters is married out. She still sends two children to live with the grandparents. The Lee Ah Siang _jia_ at this time consists of Lee Ah Siang and his wife, four unmarried sons and two unmarried daughters. Of the four sons staying at home, three work with the parents on the rented farm, the youngest is still in high school. The two unmarried daughters work as wage workers away from home. Mother Lee, in her early fifties, is the financial manager of the _jia_. She manages the pooled income, from both the selling of the farm produce and from the daughters' remittances. She redistributes the resources, for household expenses, purchasing of household items and for education. Her neighbors said that "even the husband has to ask her for pocket money." However, for their eldest daughter's marriage arrangement, it was the father who sat down with the matchmaker and the representatives of the groom-to-be's family to negotiate the bride price. His insistence on demanding an unusually high bride price during the negotiation surprised all the neighbors.

(DIAGRAM 8)

The Lee Bo Mu's jia is two door's away from Lee Ah Siang's. Grandmother Lee was an adopted xifu (child daughter-in-law) from China. Her Hakka speaking mother-in-law went back to China from Malaya and bought her as a xifu from her own widowed mother to be the wife of her second son in Malaya. Lee Bo Mu's husband died very early, leaving her with ten young children. She raised the jia by working on odd jobs and "with the help of all neighbors and relatives." Now in her early sixties, grandmother Lee is retired and she has all her four sons, her three daughters-in-law and their children, and her two unmarried daughters living with her. (Three daughters married out, and are not in her jia.) Each son and his family occupies one room under the same roof. Her jia is of an extended (grand) form.

(DIAGRAM 9)

Like Lee Long Jiu's mother, grandmother Lee is the authority of the Lee jia. Her eight year old grandson told everyone that when his uncles (grandmother Lee's adult sons) were lazy, his grandmother would scold them. The four Lee sons are in their thirties and late twenties. They work together on their vegetable farm and pool income for the jia expenses. The second son is the jia representative in external meetings and gatherings. Internally, he is the financial manager of the jia economy. The eldest son and his wife have expressed

discontent about the second brother's role as manager. They wanted to move out, but they have no money of their own since all income is in the hand of the second brother. Besides, it is the mother's wish that all sons stay under one roof. The eldest daughter-in-law took the children and returned to her natal home three or four times. But this has not persuaded the mother-in-law to rethink the living and economic arrangements of the jia.

In the above five examples, with the exception of the Wu jia, the economic unit of the jia is also the ritual unit of the jia. The representation of the jia as a group is easier to decipher. When the jia is composed of more than one economic unit, and these economic units together comprise the ritual unit, the representation of the individual units and the group becomes more complicated. The following example will illustrate this.

The Yaps at Nan Mei are a Hakka speaking family of elementary form. The Yaps are an offshoot of the Yap jia consisting of four brothers and their conjugal families (see Diagram 5). The jia went through the division process some years ago, and in their own words, the "jia" is divided. But it remains as a ritual unit, with the eldest brother having the ancestor altar at the old home. The process of "jia division" has been described in detail in Cohen (1976). After the division, the four brothers and their families each formed their

own economic units, though some informal working arrangements were maintained for sometime after the division process. For example, the second son's wife and the third son's wife used to tap rubber for the rubber estate belonging to the father-in-law, and the earnings were returned to the father-in-law. After the division, the second son's wife and her daughter-in-law continued tapping. The third son's wife began to work on sewing pillow cases at home and stopped tapping. Her husband's share of the rubber estate from the division is now tapped by the second son's wife, and the income belongs to the tapper. Jia division is not a clean-cut process. Private arrangements among the separated economic units are as complicated as the relationships among all the brothers and their wives themselves.

The Yaps form an independent economic unit. The local term for a family based economic unit, a family, a house, a branch of a jia is also jia. To avoid confusion, I will use "the family" to denote such a unit. The Yap family has two working children and three dependent children. Mr. and Mrs. Yap are both in their forties. Mr. Yap owns a hardware shop in town while Mrs. Yap uses her spare time working at home sewing pillow cases for different small businesses that have a put-out system. Among the adult members, there is only the husband-wife relationship. Both adults in the family are

engaged in production, generating income for the family. But children still consider their father as the authority of the family, and the head producer of the family. Mother's income is supplementary. The wife delegates major decision-making tasks to the husband.

Formal meetings in the city, for example the annual meeting at the Huizhou Huiguan, are attended by the husbands, but neighbor's wedding feasts are sometimes attended by the wives, or even the children. Not long before I left the village, a wedding feast was held by a neighbor. Mrs. Yap attended, and sat with a group of wives from the same village. Mr. Yap stayed at home to eat with the children the food Mrs. Yap prepared for that evening. Political party meetings and coffee shop fellowships are the domains of the male only.

Although in the economic unit, Mr. Yap is the authority, in the ritual unit of the jia in which his family is a member, Mr. Yap respects his eldest brother who is the senior and the decision maker.

The jia authority is the representative of the jia as a descent group. Patrilineal descent ideology is expressed in the preservation of the reverence for the senior male, the authority of the direct descent line. However, the jia authority representation is not necessarily invested in one person. Malaysian data indicate that the jia has a domestic domain authority

figure, a financial manager, and a jural and public domain representation. In a structurally complex *jia*, these three authority roles can be played by different members of the *jia*. In a structurally less complex *jia*, however, they may be assumed by one person. Generalization of the authority representation can be made as follows:

1) There appears to be a differentiation of authority representation in the domestic and the public domains of the *jia*. Age and seniority determine the authority in the domestic domain whereas sex and seniority determine the authority representation in the public domain.

2) Seniority and direct involvement in production are the main criteria in determining who is the financial manager of the *jia*. Exceptions seem to be related to competence and personality among co-producers.

3) The ceremonial and jural representation of the *jia* may differ from the domestic authority. The most senior male usually remains as the ceremonial and jural representative of the *jia* in the public domain. In informal settings, female members, like the male, may represent the *jia*.

Jia Economy

As a descent group, the *jia* must ensure its continuity by way of biological and social reproduction.

Economic production renders the jia reproduction possible. Production refers to economic activities that acquire resources which sustain the jia existence.

The jia is an income pooling and resource sharing unit. How resources are pooled in the jia and how pooled resources are redistributed among the jia members are important aspects of the jia as a group. The organization of the jia economy presumes the stability of the jia as a group, the submission of all members to the authority in the administration of the pooling and sharing, and the cooperation of all members to participate in the pooling and sharing. Descent ideology defines the social boundary of, and the smooth operation of, this income pooling and sharing unit, the jia.

The mode of production of the jia is not stagnant. The mode of production of the jia as a unit, and the method of income earning of jia members as individuals, vary in different stages of the jia development, and may vary in different stages of an individual's life cycle. It also reflects the social, economic, and political environment of society as a whole.

The jia as a production unit pools resources from its members from one joint economic pursuit or from diverse economic activities. The jia as a production unit does not conform to the definition of the unit of

production in a traditional Marxian sense. Diversification was already a way in which jia economy was organized even before the 1950s in West Malaysia. Freedman also observed diversification among the Singapore Chinese in the 1940s.

As an economic unit, the jia is not isolated from the wider community. A reciprocal economic relationship exists among the jia and the kindred, based on the concept of ziji ren (our own people). A kindred network ensures the survival of economic crises of individual jia by way of delayed reciprocity. Gifts from kindred and neighbors (extended kindred) in the form of money and labor assistance to pay for a costly wedding feast is a typical example. A form of economic intensification or "involution," using Geertz's terminology (1963), is also observed at the community level in order to redistribute income among the jia. During economic hard times, informal employment of baby minders or clothes washing women, or self employment in selling homemade food items, are some examples of employment involution as a form of income redistribution mechanism across the jia boundary.

Cohen (1976) argued that the jia economy is individual nuclear family oriented because the members of the jia work together to accumulate resources in the jia estate, in order to enlarge the share individual families

would receive at the time of *jia* division. The *jia* estate, therefore, is the cohesive force of the *jia* group. However, in rural Malacca, among the Chinese, the *jia* economy during most stages of the *jia* development is descent group oriented, rather than individual oriented. This study argues that the *jia* can exist without the presence of a partitionable estate. The *jia* economy is for the purpose of maintaining the *jia* as a group, until such time as individual economic units can be established. The force that cements the *jia* group together is the ideology of the *jia* as a descent group.

Income Pooling

The *jia* at its early stage of development is an economic unit. It pools all resources for the maintenance of the unit as a whole. At its later stage of development, several adult members may prefer to establish independent economic units, usually outside the living quarters of the old home. At this stage, the *jia* ceases to be an income pooling unit. But the *jia* activities pertaining to the joint activities are usually sponsored by all *jia* members. The welfare of the *jia* elders is also supported by joint effort.

As an income pooling unit, resources may be generated from the *jia* estate, which may be land, business, and other forms of property. Resources also include manpower that can be organized and utilized to

generate _jia_ funds.

Manpower in the _jia_ varies according to the stage of the _jia_ development. In an elementary type of _jia_ where there are only the parents and their children, when the children are too young to participate in production, only one or both parent(s) would be the income generator(s). When the children begin to participate in income generating activities, _jia_ income is pooled by both the parents and the children. The timing of children's participation in production is difficult to define. If the _jia_ economic activities involve farming or family small business, children who begin school, usually around the age of six or seven, also begin to work on the farm, doing odd jobs such as weeding, removing insects, and helping in harvesting. Children who know addition and subtraction begin to work in the family grocery shop. In a _jia_ where income is derived from sources outside the _jia_ resources, children's role is more indirect, or delayed. Domestic chores such as baby minding, clothes washing (by hand), and cooking can be considered income generating in an indirect manner as they make it possible for other members of the _jia_ to participate in direct income generating tasks.

In an elementary family, income is usually centralized in the hands of the _jia_ manager, who might be

the father or the mother. In the domestic domain, the father may be the only person who has the key to the drawer or cabinet which holds the _jia_ cash and the bankbook. In some cases, the mother holds the key. Both parents can decide if a child should leave school in order to provide an an extra pair of hands on the farm, or if the child should continue school so that he/she could have a better paying job in the future. The father is still considered as having the final say, reflecting the prevalence of the patriarchal ideology. At this stage of _jia_ development, the _jia_ economy differs little from the western model, one example being the English family economy described by Grey (Cited in Segalen 1986:266ff).

In a more developed elementary family, income pooling is comparatively more complex. If the _jia_ economy is concentrated, parents and grown up children work as a unit of production, with one of the parents being the manager. If the _jia_ economy is dispersed, with some of the children, or all the children working outside the home, income pooling takes a different form. For example, Lee A Siang _jia_ has three sons working with the parents on the rented family farm. Mother Lee takes charge of money from sales of produce from the farm. The third son used to be a cooking utensil salesman. He spent three months traveling with a sales team all over

the peninsula. During that period, he sold only four sets of cooking ware for the company and earned not enough commission to pay for food and lodging on the road. He was forgiven for not earning enough income to turn over to the mother for the jia. He eventually returned home just before Chinese New Year in 1986, and joined the family farming team. Though there is an extra pair of hands on the farm, there is not enough work for five adults to do on the two acres of farmland (bu gou zuo). The third son is hoping to win the lottery so that he can buy a van and begin a vending business. Apparently, buying lottery tickets is a serious venture. Gods and ghosts are invoked to give "four numbers" for the lottery (which calls for four single digit numbers). Lottery winners donate part of the winning money to the gods for charity purposes.

Besides the income from the farm, two unmarried daughters work at wage jobs. Each brings back about one hundred ringgit a month, or about 40% to 50% of their income, for the mother for jia expenses. They keep the rest for their own expenses and savings. The eldest daughter was getting married at the end of 1986. She was to use her own savings to purchase jia zhuong (dowry), which usually comes from the bride's jia. The pooled income at Lee A Siang's jia, thus, consists of income from sales of farm produce and daughters' wages. The

daughter's savings can be considered as pre-allocated _jia_ funds for her wedding. In fact, in some _jia_, the mother saves some of the daughter's contribution to the _jia_ funds for the daughter's wedding. When money is tight, this money is often used for other expenses. Short term needs often have to be met before long term plans.

In a more complex _jia_, economic arrangements can be complicated. The Lee _jia_ described in Chapter VI (see Diagram 2) serves as an example. The Lees have one daughter and six sons. What this _jia_ went through in different stages of the _jia_ development represents several economic arrangements of many village _jia_ today. This Lee _jia_ began as a _jia_ of elementary family form with the father and one son. Just to review the _jia_ history, Old Lee came from China, following some relatives. Old Lee married in Malaya and had one son, Lee Jie Fu. Old Mother Lee died when the son was a few years old. Lee Jie Fu and his father later worked as a team farming, planting vegetables for sale. In 1950, Lee Jie Fu was married and his _jia_ began to expand. For nearly 10 years, father Old Lee helped look after the children while Lee Jie Fu and his wife worked on the farm. When the first daughter was able to look after younger siblings, she replaced the grandfather, staying at home after school and cooking the meals. Every child, when old enough to go to school, also began to work after

school on the farm as <u>bange gong</u> (half a labor). Income was pooled from the sale of produce alone.

In 1973, Old Lee died and the second son was the first <u>jia</u> member to leave the <u>jia</u> cooperation team. He left home to study in the capital city. Around the same time, the third son went to work for a construction company in the northeastern peninsula. The vegetable prices were good and the farm was making money, and Lee Jie Fu invested the <u>jia</u> capital in a coffee shop in a nearby town. The daughter managed the <u>jia</u> business there. The rest of the <u>jia</u> still worked as a team on the farm. <u>Jia</u> income was pooled from the sale of the produce from the farm and from the coffee shop. The fourth son was not earning enough to send money home, but the <u>jia</u> was not in great need of a contributed remittance. In fact, another investment was made by the <u>jia</u> in a fertilizer company which soon went bankrupt and the money was lost.

In late 1970s, the farm had to be abandoned because of flooding. But by then, four of the six sons were working on different jobs, and the <u>jia</u> coffee shop was still running. The first son rented some land and farmed with his parents. The daughter ran the coffee shop. The second and the fourth sons were wage workers in East Malaysia, and the third son who worked in construction was married and soon had two children. The

third son left his wife and two children at home with the parents. He brought money home for his wife and children; and gave mother money, too. His wife took care of the household cooking, washing, and maintenance. The mother-in-law by then was freed of daily chores. The second and the fourth sons came home once a year during Chinese New Year from East Malaysia. That was the time they brought back their remittance for the mother. The mother was happy that these two sons were financially independent. They didn't live and eat at home or spend jia money in any way. They didn't contribute to the jia fund, but they didn't consume either. The jia income at this stage came mainly from produce from the rented farm and the coffee shop. Another investment was made in the purchase of 10 acres of rubber land.

In 1986, the family gave up farming. Lee Jie Fu was 56 and retired and the jia coffee shop was closed. The first son went to work for his maternal uncle in Kuala Lumpur; the daughter married and had a son. The fourth and fifth sons were at home out of work temporarily. The second son was then married and he and his wife worked in the capital city. They left their daughter with the grandmother at home. The household consisted of the two parents, the three year old daughter of the second son, the third daughter-in-law with two children, the temporarily out of work fourth and fifth

sons, and the sixth son who was still at high school. The _jia_ expenses at this time relied on the income from the production of the 10 acre rubber estate, and the contribution from the second and the third sons. The second son who left his daughter at home for the mother to care for brought "milk powder money" for the mother. The third son still contributed to the _jia_ fund as his wife and children live with his parental _jia_. Other sons provided "pocket money" to the mother whenever they visited home. The daughter did not take home money, but she visited often and brought food over to share with the mother.

The _jia_ income, if based on Cohen's notion, should be from all the male children as demanded by the father's authority since the _jia_ is not yet divided (1976). In rural Malacca, such is not the case. The _jia_ economy is fluid, just as the _jia_ residential arrangement is fluid.

The Lee _jia_ in different stages of _jia_ development had very different income pooling arrangements. The _jia_ economy was dependent on the life cycle of _jia_ members. It also reflected the social, economic and political environments: prices of the vegetable market, the land conditions due to industrial development in the vicinity, the sideline investments the _jia_ made, the employment market in the cities. Income

pooling has existed for nearly forty years. But the arrangements have been flexible, adapting to the situations of the time and the jia. Income pooling is a socially sanctioned behavior, which does not depend on the authority of the father. In fact, I would argue that income pooling is based on the consensus of the members of the jia to recognize the jia as a unit that individual members have obligations to as well as rights. During the period when income pooling is required for the existence of the jia, all members participate and the jia authority acts as the management. When the jia does not have to depend on remittances to maintain itself, individual members retain a certain degree of financial independence, but remittances in various forms still may occur. On the other hand, when individual members temporarily lose the ability to be financially independent, the jia serves as the reserve for temporary relief. Such flexibility in rights and obligations, and such permanency in membership in a social institution have not been observed outside the jia institution.

As suggested by Cohen, the jia authority and manager can demand remittances, but often this demand in Malaccan Chinese jia is a flexible one, depending upon the financial needs of the jia at the time. Remittance is expected of jia members only when the jia maintenance cannot be dependent on one single source, often that of

the head producer. Remittances in this case are often demanded of each jia member who has the potential to work. The Chen jia of Nan Mei is a good example.

Mr. Chen works as a rubber tapper, earning on an average 20 ringgit a day when there is latex to tap. (About three to four months each year, rubber tapping has to stop due to rain or dry season.) In 1986, Mr. Chen felt the pinch of the economy due to falling rubber latex prices. The jia with three school going children could not be supported by one producer. Mrs. Chen then began taking care of two small children during the day for a neighbor, Mrs. Wong, and was paid 60 ringgit a month. This opportunity came because Mrs. Wong's husband was laid off due to general economic depression in Malaysia in 1986, and Mrs. Wong had to begin tapping for her mother in order to supplement her own family income. With Mrs. Chen willing to help her, Mrs. Wong could have a monthly income of around 200 Malaysian ringgit, about the amount Mr. Chen would earn. The Chens' joint income of 260 ringgit a month barely maintains the family of five. Mr. Chen told me his 17 year old eldest son would have to help out, to start working at the end of the 1986 school year when he finishes Form Five (equivalent to 11th grade).

It appears that the concerns for the jia as a unit are not that of the parents alone. Some children,

realizing the hardship the jia is suffering, offer to discontinue school in order to share the burden. The 22 year old daughter of the Yang jia gave up the opportunity to go to college, "because my parents are working too hard for us (Baba mama tai xinku le)." She worked as a farmer side by side with her parents. There were no sons old enough to contribute labor to the farm.

Remittances do not go into a single pool, as economists and anthropologists often assume (Becker 1981). As mentioned earlier, working children often send or bring money or gifts home on visits, especially on Chinese New Year. This remittance is often said to be for the mother, gei mama. Lee Jie Fu's children bring money for the mother; Lee A Siang's unmarried daughters each gives 100 ringgit from their monthly wage to their mother; Lee Jie Fu's neighbor, Grandmother Lee, receives one to two hundred ringgit a month from each of her factory-employed daughters. Her working daughter-in-law also gives one hundred a month to the mother-in-law and saves the rest for her conjugal family. These mothers, with the exception of Lee A Siang's wife, are not jia managers. Some villagers say the mother is in charge of everyday expenses, so they give the money to the mother for household use. Some say the father has income, but the mother does not, so they give pocket money to the mother. One daughter said her father would refuse

"coffee money" from her because "he said he has his own income." Remittances in the form of pocket money become mother's money, to be used at her discretion. While wage income gives working children a sense of financial independence, the pocket money they send back to their mother allows her to have her private fund. Cohen (1976) described the se-koi, or szu-fang-ch'ien (women's private money), as derived primarily from a bride's dowry. In rural Malacca, an older women's private fund is derived from remittance, in addition to the dowry.

Regular or irregular remittance is also given to the jia authority, the elderly male who is no longer actively involved in jia production. All the sons in the Wu jia mentioned earlier in this chapter (see Diagram 7) gave money to their elderly father regularly until he died. The eldest son was the manager of the jia, he also provided jia expenses for the father, a maternal grandmother, his unmarried brother, and his own conjugal family of four children. During annual festivals, his married brothers and their families would come home to celebrate together. Both the married sons would also give money to the father, the maternal great grandmother and the eldest brother's children. With the remittance, the old father would have his money to go to the coffee shop daily, sometimes bringing back snacks and pork for the daughter-in-law to cook. On Chinese New Year, the

father could give hong bao (a red envelope containing money) to grandchildren. The remittance allows the dependent elders to be financially independent to a certain degree.

Remittances can be in the form of gifts, such as a refrigerator, a TV set, or a VCR, appliances the parents generation could not have afforded in the past. Mrs. Shaw of Nan Mei showed me the TV and the refrigerator her son bought for the jia after he had established his own household in the suburbs, away from the natal home.

These observations show that remittances have many forms, ranging from cash to gifts, from regular monthly payment to incidental allowance, from payment for specific reasons such as child care and milk powder, to parent's pocket money or "coffee money". The amount varies depending on the income of the individual, and the need of the jia. The jia manager has the authority to demand remittance. The jia also recognizes the needs of individual workers. Only those jia with an urgent need for additional income would exercise the demand for remittance. The remittance may be used, or saved. One mother said she saves the money her daughters give her for the daughters' future dowry. A father saves the money for his funeral (guan zai ben). Remittance allows the retired unproductive members of the jia to have some

"income" and enjoy the sense of financial independence.

Unmarried working women keep part of their income at their own discretion. This money is often said to be for the dowry (ban jia zhuong). Traditionally, this dowry comes from the jia fund. During the marriage negotiation, the bride's parents will demand a fixed amount of pin jin, the closest English equivalent being bride price. Supposedly, with this money, the bride's parents could purchase part of the bedroom furnishing, clothes, jewelry, and other items for the daughter to take to the groom's house on the wedding day. It is a great embarrassment for the bride and her parents if the daughter goes to the groom's house empty handed. The bride's parents can also use the pin jin to pay for the feast for their relatives before their daughter leaves home for the groom's house. Some parents were said to keep the money for themselves. In such cases, people's malicious gossip will exert great pressure on the bride and her parents, "See, they are selling their daughter (mai nur)!"

Dowry, or jia zhuang, traditionally comes from the bride's parents. The jia fund is used to prepare the dowry for the daughter's marriage. Unmarried daughter's savings can be considered as a form of early diversion of the jia fund, which the young woman producer has direct access to and control of before her marriage. Financial

control over self earned savings allows young women in the Chinese community to have a better sense of self image and confidence. It also gives the _jia_ authority of the bride-to-be the power to negotiate _pin jin_ (bride price) with the future in-law. It was said that Lee A Siang, the farmer from Huang Jia Shan, negotiated the bride price and gifts with the parents of his daughter's fiance (a taxi driver), who are from an urban based _jia_. He demanded from his daughter's future in-laws 3,000 ringgit , one roast pig, one hundred boxes of cakes, four bottles of wine, and six vehicles to transport the bride's relatives from the village to the city for the wedding. His daughter was 32, but had been working as a maid in the capital city for five years, had aquired savings and had tailoring skill. Everyone in the village was gossiping about the high bride price, the ordinary price being around 2,000 ringgit.

As mentioned earlier, pooled income can be derived from the investment of labor. The investment of labor does not necessarily generate direct income, labor invested in housework being one example. In a broad sense, productive labor contributes to the _jia_ economy. The disposition of labor for activities that directly or indirectly generate income for the maintenance of the _jia_ is an important aspect of the _jia_ economy.

The Tay jia example mentioned earlier illustrates this point well. Old Father Tay lived with three sons and their conjugal families under one roof, each son and his family occupying one room in the same house. The Tay jia owned several acres of land, but the land they farmed on was rented. Everyday, one of the daughters-in-law would volunteer to stay at home to manage the house, take care of the young children of all three families, and cook the meals for all. Old Father Tay was the authority and the manager. All jia members lived and ate together. In addition, daughters-in-law received money from the father-in-law for clothing and for visits to the hairdresser. Sons received monthly allowance from their father. When the first son's conjugal family grew too big to be contained in one room, and because his wife complained bitterly, the first son asked his father to fen jia (divide). Old Father Tay was unwilling but agreed to try. Each son built a house next to the old house, and "each has its own entrance and stove, each has its own rented farmland," according to one of the granddaughters. The jia owned land was designated as the jia estate, and should never be divided "so that future generation can build houses on it" as Old Father Tay demanded. After the separation, according to the granddaughter, life was harder because labor was divided and each conjugal family would have to take care

of its own unit. In the third son's family, there were 12 children, four boys and eight girls, in the order of 6F-1M-1F-2M-1F-1M. The fifth girl was given away for adoption. The fourth girl Gui Xiang, my informant, told me that when her eldest sister was small, she looked after the rest of the children. When she was old enough to work on the farm, the next girl took her place in caring for the siblings, allowing the first girl to take part in farming. When Gui Xiang was able to look after younger ones, the older sisters all went to the farm. When she and the younger ones were able to go to the farm, the older sister went back to care for the house and took care of cooking because of health problems.

The three sons' families all went through similar cycles of labor displacement. In addition, while girls went through this process, boys went to school. Girls also went to school, but none had more than elementary school education. Gui Xiang is now married and has her own family. She mentioned that her mother's life became easier when a new well was dug inside her house. The three Tay sons and their families used to share one well, and each mother had to carry water from the _jia_ well to the house five times a day to fill the family water storage jars.

In a farming _jia_, labor is valued as money. With the _jia_ unit divided into three, there was three

times more labor used in house keeping than previously, when most of the labor had been invested in farm production.

(DIAGRAM 10)

Another example comes from a non-farming conjugal family separated from the Yap _jia_ at Nan Mei. Yap A Loi, the father, runs a hardware and construction materials shop in town. The income was supplemented by A Loi's wife who used to tap rubber. The couple had a maternal niece who lived in and helped with child care as Mrs. Yap worked at the rubber plantation from dawn to nearly noon. When the niece was married, Mrs. Yap had to find a sideline job that did not force her to leave the house. She began working on put-out work, sewing uniforms. Recently, she started machine embroidering pillow cases.

Embroidering is time intensive. How much time one can invest in sitting at the sewing machine determines how many sets of pillow cases one can embroider. On a good day, Mrs. Yap embroiders six sets of pillow cases; each set has six to seven pieces and she is paid between 3.00 to 3.40 ringgit per set. After deducting the cost of the colored threads, Mrs. Yap has the potential to make about 400 ringgit a month. Mrs. Yap has five children. The older two daughters work in the capital city and send remittance home every month.

The other three children are at home and still schooling. So that she will have time to work on the sewing machine, her third daughter does the laundry (by hand) every night, and the youngest son sweeps the house every morning. The daughters also do the cooking during weekends. Every night, the sixteen year old daughter sits by the well doing laundry for the family for about an hour. In the mean time, the sewing machine would be humming. Mr. Yap folds up the finished pillow cases for the wife at the end of the day. The time the daughters and the son put in housework equals the extra time Mrs. Yap gains to work on income generating work at home. If Mrs. Yap works on an average five hours a day on the pillow cases, one third of that time was contributed by the children, which may equal one third of her sideline income, about 133 Malaysian ringgit a month.

The above examples illustrate the fact that although only some members of the _jia_ actually bring income to the _jia_ resource pool, the pooling of income is in fact a group effort. Every member of the _jia_ participates in the pooling effort, beginning at different stages of the _jia_ development, in different capacities. Therefore, in a broad sense, the _jia_ is still a unit of production, with a range of modified modes of production. Resources gathered for the financial pool are generated by the investment of labor.

This investment of labor in turn generates income directly or indirectly.

The *jia* economic unit at a certain point in time will experience separation. This separation may be due to *feng jia* (*jia* division) when the *jia* land or property is divided among the children. The process formally and legally passes the *jia* property to the members. Customarily, the estate is equally divided among all male descendants. Variations abound. The local Hokkiens claim that only the Hokkiens give inheritance to the daughters. The rules and practice of the *jia* division process of the Taiwanese near Taipei and the Hakka in southern Taiwan have been reported in Sung (1981) and Cohen (1976) respectively. Once the jural division of the *jia* occurs, the constituent *jia* member units become economically independent. In rural Malaysia, only some *jia* have experienced this process. The Tays mentioned above, the Yaps and the Lims of Nan Mei are three examples already described in this study. Two were originally non-farm, business based *jia*, and one was farm based. Almost always, after the jural division, the economic units rejoin to form a ritual unit for ancestor worship.

Most of the *jia* I visited never went through the *feng jia* process. The *jia* economic unit naturally breaks into several units when adult producers engaging in

different economic pursuits establish their own conjugal units, which usually are closer to the job than the old *jia* home. Examples already presented include the Wu *jia* of Jin Cun, and the Lee Jie Fu *jia* of Huang Jia Shan. The former began as a wage earning unit, the latter a farm group. Again, almost as a rule, after the establishment of separate economic units, the *jia* sub units form a ritual unit for ancestor worship. The commitment to worship together appears to be stronger among the *jia* members who never went through the jural division process. On the other hand, the size and number of generations within the *jia* and its sub-economic units, the geographic distance between the sub-economic units and the old home, the convenience of mobilizing a large group of people to come to a central location for ritual meals, and the closeness of all the brothers and their sisters-in-law all affect the eagerness of sub-units to gather in one place during set time. This is when the patrilineal descent ideology and the *jia* as a conceptual unit are put to the test.

Resource Redistribution

The *jia* during its early stage of development is a unit of production in a modified sense, but it is also a unit of consumption where the pooled resources are redistributed.

To briefly reiterate the income pooling concept,

resources for the maintenance and wealth accumulation of the *jia* are derived from income in return for labor investment, or generated from properties passed on to the *jia* through inheritance. For most of the *jia* in rural Malacca, the latter may not be present due to shallow local genealogy and the pioneer status of the Chinese in rural Malaysia. Pooled income is usually generated from labor investment. Labor investment may generate direct income, or it may indirectly generate income. Pooled income may be from more than one source. Diversification is an expression of an adaptive response of the *jia* in a changing economy. Remittance results from *jia* members working away from the *jia* economic base. How income is pooled depends on the development stage of the *jia*, the income generating opportunities present, and the labor and financial resources available to the *jia*. Finally, it is the *jia* ideology, not the paternal authority or the reinforcement of the *jia* estate that prompts the *jia* members to pool income as a unit.

How is pooled income redistributed? It has been generally agreed that in the Anglo-American family, income is used to maintain the domestic unit, and the overflow would be used to spend, to save, or to invest (Wilk 1987). In the Chinese *jia* in Yen-liao, Taiwan, the *jia* funds are redistributed to support the *jia* group, to pay for the wedding, and to enrich the *jia* estate (Cohen

1976:112ff). In discussing the redistributive function of the *jia* in rural Malacca, I will look at two major areas of redistribution functions: maintenance of the *jia*, and investment.

A. Maintenance of the *Jia*

In order for the *jia* to survive, members of the *jia* group have to be housed, fed, clothed, and blessed by ancestors and deities. These functions are here defined as maintenance of the *jia* group.

In an elementary family, the redistribution of the *jia* resources is relatively simple. Grey's model for a working class English household is again applicable to the *jia*. According to Grey, the father is generally the main income earner. He gives his income minus discretionary fund to his wife for housekeeping. The discretionary fund is for personal expenses and for specific household items such as large bills, furniture, or educational costs. If the wife works, her income goes into housekeeping. If the children work, their income goes to the mother, who puts some into the housekeeping money, and returns some as allowance.

In rural Malacca, variations of this model exist. For example, in Lee A Siang's *jia*, the mother controls all the *jia* funds derived from the selling of produce. The father asks money from the mother when he needs it. In the Chow *jia* in Nan Mei, the *jia* income

derived from the father's vending business and the sons' middlemen trading maintains the _jia_. The mother's income from her own business is used mainly to support the youngest son who is studying overseas.

When children become direct producers, the pooling and redistribution patterns become complicated by the dispersion of the _jia_ members in residence and in economic diversification. If the primary _jia_ needs its producers' income, either for maintenance or for younger children's education, dispersed producers are obliged to send part of their income home regularly. Dispersed producers usually keep the rest for their own maintenance. The _jia_ accepts their contribution, but does not have to pay for their daily expenses. From the point of view of inter-generation relationship, this can be described as a form of "delayed reciprocity," for children to pay back the support they received as dependents. From the point of view of _jia_ fund redistribution, it can be considered as a diffused management style. The financial manager still exists, but the flow of funds takes a convenient shortcut. Rather than centralizing all the sources of income to the _jia_ fund, then redistributing to its members, part of the revenue goes to the _jia_ manager, while part of the revenue is retained by the individuals for the maintenance of the individual producers. Such a diffused

jia fund redistribution style is directly related to the dispersed residency of the individual producers. It is adaptive to the condition that the jia ceases to be a localized unit of production. When the jia is a unit of production, the fund remains centralized. Some village girls reported that if they work, but live together with the rest of the jia, they usually turn over all of their income to the mother, and receive an allowance from the mother, an arrangement similar to that reported by Grey for the working class British family.

The flow of dispersed individual producers' income back to the jia fund may be delayed if the producer's income does not meet his/her own expenses. There were occasions when parents at Sa Le and Nan Mei talked about having to send money to pay for a son's car purchase in the capital city. This is of course only possible if the primary jia has the means to do so. In another case, the mother complained about her son not having enough money for himself, not to mention not enough for sending remittance home. But she said at least she did not have to send money to the son. In both cases, the primary jia are not in urgent need of children's income for jia maintenance. Female children seem to be more diligent in regular remittance than male children, and they seem to be more persistent in sending money back home, usually until they marry.

In rural communities, education interferes with labor participation. If members of the *jia* continue to pursue higher education, they delay their earning by the number of extra years spent in school. Decision to allow members to stay out of the production team is a decision of the *jia* as a work team. Maximization of income, as economists would suggest (Becker 1976; Schultz 1974), is not necessarily the strategy rural Chinese adopt. If the *jia* financial needs are acute, short term benefit outweighs long term maximization. At Huang Jia Shan, all the four sons of the Lee Bo Mu's *jia* had only five or six years of education because the fatherless *jia* was poor and the farm needed their labor. Lee Long Jiu's two older sons had six years of schooling each. Lee Long Jiu needed the young men to work with him on the farm during the time when vegetable prices soared. At Nan Mei, Mr. Chen the rubber tapper wanted his son to begin working after middle school because his own income could hardly support a family of five.

If there is a choice between educating sons verses educating daughters, usually the sons are favored. In Gui Xiang's natal *jia*, (the Tay *jia*), of the 12 children, all the girls worked on the farm and at home during and after primary school while the boys went to school beyond sixth grade. In this case, female labor is as valuable as male labor. With the females working on

the farm, it is possible for the male children to receive education. The rationale behind such favoritism reflects the nature of traditional patrilineal male bias.

Although male bias remains, the perception of education for females has been changing. This changing trend is more visible in non-farm villages, such as Nan Mei. Yap A Loi's two older daughters have been working as an account clerk and as a temporary teacher for the past two to three years. They have been most diligent in sending remittance to support the family, to help pay for the education of the three younger siblings. A year ago, the second daughter had an opportunity to go to a teacher training college. A decision had to be made between short term benefits and long term benefits. If the daughter continued teaching as a temporary teacher, earning 200 to 300 ringgit a month, the jia benefits from the continuous flow of remittance of around 120 ringgit a month. If this daughter went to college, she would earn double or triple the amount after three years of training. In the mean time, for three years, there would not be the constant flow of remittance. Mr. Yap, after consulting several relatives, decided that the family could and would sacrifice the short term remittance for the long term benefit. In addition to a larger remittance for the jia, a formal teacher's training would give the daughter a profession that pays highly enough to

allow her to continue work even after she gets married. The concept of a young woman having the opportunity to earn an income after marriage has been received enthusiastically among parents in recent years. Other examples include Mrs. Tsai of Nan Mei persuading her daughter to quit her factory job in order to learn tailoring so that when the daughter gets married and has children she could still earn a living; and Mr. Lee A Siang of Huang Jia Shan having bargaining power with his urban future in-laws concerning his daughter's marriage.

Traditionally, married out daughters cannot be expected to support the natal _jia_. This concept still prevails. If the _jia_ is in dire need of the financial support of the working daughters, or is unwilling to let go the portion of the income from the working daughter, marriage proposals could be declined or postponed as a way to retain her income for as long as possible. Married daughters give their loyalty to their new _jia_ and their conjugal family. If a married daughter brings presents and pocket money home, it is thought of as gifts from both the daughter and the good son-in-law. The son-in-law has the right to stop the wife from doing so. But, on the other hand, if the married out daughter can afford to bring gifts home, it is a good indication that the son-in-law is a good provider. The son-in-law has gained "face," and so have the daughter's parents. But

such gifts are often limited to special occasions, such as birthdays, Chinese New Years, and a few other calendrical celebrations.

Redistribution in an extended and joint jia can be complex as the relationships within the jia group become more complicated. The following account was relayed to me by a daughter-in-law in her late twenties. A Mei is the third daughter-in-law in a jia with four married sons and their conjugal families living together with their elderly widowed mother. A Mei came from an extended jia before she was married. Her natal jia consisted of three generations, with grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces under one roof, sharing the same stove. The older two generations all work together on the jia farm. Income was pooled and managed by the grandfather. There were several second generation nuclear families within the jia. When a daughter or son from one of the second generation nuclear families worked outside the jia farm, the income went to the mother of the nuclear family as a family fund, not the jia fund. Therefore, if a nuclear family had several children working in the factory and they brought back wages, this nuclear family would have a financial advantage over the other nuclear families in the jia, and this nuclear family fund would not be shared. In the mean time, all members of the jia, including those children working

outside the _jia_, shared the _jia_ funds pooled by the farming members. Conflicts arose. As a result, to be fair to the rest of the members, and to maintain the harmony of a _jia_ group, no member of the _jia_ was allowed to work outside the _jia_ farm. This is a case where _jia_ group ideology interfered the development of diversification and economic independence.

Another form of redistribution arrangement is exemplified by a once complex _jia_ at _pekan_ Nan Mei. One of the daughters-in-law of the Su _jia_ described the internal arrangement as follows. The Su _jia_ at Nan Mei owned a coffee shop on a rented lot along the _pekan_ main street. When the first generation Old Father was alive, the whole _jia_, including five sons and their conjugal families and two unmarried daughters, all participated in the _jia_ business. All the _jia_ members lived under the same roof and ate together. The father used the pooled _jia_ fund to pay for food and other expenses for everyone. The eldest son and the second son began working outside the _jia_ business, but their conjugal families continued to live and eat with the _jia_ group. These two sons then contributed to pay for different items for the _jia_. For instance, the eldest son was responsible for _jia_ water and electricity bills, while the second son bought rice for the whole _jia_. Since they worked outside the _jia_ business, they were responsible for their own nuclear

family's clothing and pocket money.

This arrangement changed when the father died. Old Father had declared that the shop must continue. The youngest son then took over the shop and the care of the mother. The rest of the sons and their conjugal families moved out of the shop site and engaged in their own economic pursuits. Each nuclear family became an independent economic unit. But the physical setup of the jia business initiated by the Old Father remains as a joint property, and was never jurally divided. The youngest son uses it to derive income for his stem family. The daughter-in-law who gave this account, and her husband recently borrowed some coffee shop furniture from the original shop for their rented home across the main street to make preparations for opening a breakfast shop. This daughter-in-law mentioned that the furniture, dishes, plates, chop sticks, and cooking utensils and other equipment are common property. Any initial jia member has access to them to make a living.

The general rules of pooling and sharing of jia funds appear to be as follows: if the jia is land based, members work together on land and share expenses as a group. Under-utilized labor would seek other opportunities outside the jia economic base, and send remittance home while remaining financially independent from the jia. In such cases, the jia fund that is

supposed to be redistributed to the members working outside of the _jia_ economic base is self repatriated by the producer before it flows into the _jia_ fund pool. If the _jia_ is not land based, diversification is often the rule. _Jia_ members who work outside the _jia_ community send remittance home, while remaining financially independent from the _jia_. If the _jia_ has a localized business, such as a grocery shop or a coffee shop, it is the parents who usually maintain the business while children venture into other opportunities, and if they are financially independent, send remittance home. When a _jia_ member becomes a producer outside the _jia_ economy, he remains a member of the _jia_ group by participating in the pooling of _jia_ funds. He maintains the right to have direct access to the _jia_ fund, and the right to return to the economy of the primary _jia_.

When an adult male producer of the _jia_ gets married and establishes his own conjugal family, his primary income goes to support his own conjugal family. His remittance home tends to become less regular, and eventually is reduced to gifts or pocket money. He is expected to contribute to more costly _jia_ events such as a brother's wedding, the father's birthday, or an older member's funeral. He is also expected to share the cost of "incense money" for the grave site visits. Adult female members, when married, are not expected to

continue contributions to the natal jia. Some parents view the bride price (pin jin) as the last sum of money they can derive from their daughter, though paid by the jia of the future son-in-law.

Cohen stated in his study that it is the jural right of the jia members to expect the jia to pay for their wedding costs. My data show that as jia members often becoming financially independent before marriage, such expectation has been made the exception rather than the rule. Daughters get to save part of their earning for expenses and ban jia zhuang (preparing dowry). Sons often become financially independent before "settling down." The wedding costs are borne by the groom (who may be a co-producer on the jia farm, or has some income source outside the jia), and the siblings of the groom (who have the duty to share the cost of their brother's wedding). Whatever comes from the jia joint fund is perhaps contributed by all the producers, including the groom, in the process of income pooling. The jia funds for the sons' weddings have been redistributed in a modified form from that traditionally perceived in a jia with concentrated economy (or, as a unit of production and consumption).

The beginning of financial independence does not mark the permanent departure of a member from the jia group. The jia members retain their rights to return to

the _jia_ and to have access to the _jia_ fund. Redistribution of _jia_ fund was again extended to these _jia_ members even though there is temporary discontinuity of contribution from them to the _jia_ fund. This can be considered as a form of delayed redistribution, transferring _jia_ funds previously accrued from the _jia_ contributors. In 1986, most of the returning construction workers at Huang Jia Shan rejoined the _jia_ farm, helping _jia_ members to work in the planting and marketing of vegetables. At Nan Mei, retrenched lorry drivers began small businesses, selling _air_ (home made cold drinks) at the factory gate or selling dry groceries at _pasar malam_ (shifting night markets). Even those temporarily staying unproductive enjoyed the sharing of _jia_ funds, a right generally approved by social consensus in the village setting.

As mentioned earlier, the _jia_ may cease to be an income pooling unit when the _jia_ grows beyond one single economic unit, especially when adult sons establish their own economic units outside the home base. This could be due to formal jural division of the _jia_ estate, or due to informal leave-taking by each son from the _jia_ economic base. The dynamics of redistribution reflects the _jia_ economic arrangement. At this stage, each economic unit becomes an income pooling and redistribution unit. On a higher level, the _jia_ as a ritual unit is maintained by

common funds. Unlike the traditional lineage organization, there is no jia land set aside to produce income for a specific purpose, and there is no jia hall or shrine built specifically for joint worship. The ancestor altar at the old jia home continues to be the focal location to place the soul of the recently deceased, which in fact does not happen at a rapid rate, not by year or decade, but by generation. The old jia home continues to be the place to hold joint New Year celebrations. The costs of joint activities are expected to be shared by all the male descendants.

The interesting fact is that since no rules regarding sharing and redistribution at this stage have been formalized in the form of clan rules recorded in genealogy books, the practice more or less depends on social gossip for its reinforcement. Such social gossip appears to be based on a cultural perception as to "what would be right to do." A few days after the Wu jia male descendants and their conjugal families completed the Qing Ming grave clearing, the following conversation went on between a member of the Wu jia and a kindred at the kindred's house.

Kindred woman: Did all the brothers go to the grave site?
Wu jia member: Yes, Big brother and his family were there, Third brother and his family were there, Fourth brother was there, but Second brother and his family were lost in the terrible traffic. They came after we were gone.
Kindred woman: Did the Third brother and the Second

brother bring back incense and candle money (_xiangzhu qian_) for the Big brother?

Wu _jia_ member: Oh, what is that?

Kindred woman: You people live in the city so you do not know. Though the money is small, everyone should contribute to the rite. Only that is right (_zheyang cai dui_).

The pooling and the redistribution of the _jia_ fund are dynamic. The _jia_ does not respond to the needs within, and the restraints and opportunities without in a passive and stagnant way. Neither does the _jia_ makes its decisions solely for the maximization of the _jia_ economy. The _jia_ is "an institution capable of...action" (Segalen 1986:6).

B. _Jia_ Investment

The _jia_ funds are pooled from income generated from the labor investment of all _jia_ members, and from income derived from properties passed on to the _jia_ through inheritance. These _jia_ funds are used for the maintenance of the _jia_ group, and for investments in order to improve the quality of the _jia_ life. _Jia_ investment, like _jia_ income pooling, is often private and idiosyncratic. However, a general trend can be observed.

Jia investment can be divided into two types, tangible and intangible. The former refers to assets that can be bought and sold at a price, such as rubber small holdings, real estate, stocks and bonds, and businesses; the latter refers to assets that cannot be

readily transferred, such as skills and education. _Jia_ investments are directly related to the economic status of the _jia_. However, they are not necessarily the consequence of having an "overflow" in the household budget (See household budget models discussed in Wilk 1987). In rural Chinese _jia_, investment is part of redistribution, the result of careful calculation by the _jia_ authority and manager.

a. Tangible Investment

Of the two types of investments, tangible investment is often viewed as the result of having overflow in the _jia_ fund. Only after the necessities of the _jia_ have been satisfied would a tangible investment be possible. In the rural Chinese villages, most _jia_ began with little capital and no inheritance. Through hard work and being thrifty, the _jia_ began the process of accumulation. For the New Villagers, the first sign of _jia_ fund overflow is the rebuilding of the living quarters. Mrs. Lee Jie Fu said that when her mother came to visit her after she got married, her mother could not help but cry because she found out that her daughter was married into a farming tenant family that had only an atap house with earthen floor and a leaking roof. In the kitchen, there was not even an extra pair of chop sticks and an extra bowl for guests to eat with. The year then was 1950. Fifteen years later Mrs. Lee had seven

children and with good vegetable prices and four of her children helping on the farm, she was able to rebuild the atap house as a wooden Chinese structure with six rooms. Mrs. Lee's mother was able to witness this first sign of improvement before she died.

Besides the living structure, New Villagers purchase basic household appliances such as a sewing machine, gas stove, TV, and means of transportation such as a motorcycle, and a car. The refrigerator and a modern squatting type lavatory with flushing water usually come after the vehicle. In 1986, washing machines were seen in some households, and many households owned a VCR. Washing laundry by hand was still the rule even at homes where washing machines were available. People view the washing machine with suspicion: without energetic rubbing and rinsing, soiled farm clothes cannot be clean. Besides, washing machines require running water from the tap which costs money, whereas well water is free. Even though running water reached the New Village some 15 years ago, most people haul well water to do the laundry.

Beyond the household purchases, most people agree that the following two items are worth investing in: rubber small holdings, and houses. In 1986, however, the former was shunned. With the rubber prices fluctuating depending on ever decreasing international

commodity market prices in 1986, and with land prices fluctuating due to speculation based on state government development policies, the value of rubber holdings became quite uncertain. Buying houses as a form of investment became highly desirable in 1986. Investing money in business ventures has been tested by several Huang Jia Shan residents. Most villagers consider business ventures risky, and some adventurous villagers lost a great deal of money because they "listened to advice given by friends to invest, but did not have any knowledge of business nor of financial markets." Lee Long Jiu admitted losing 80,000 ringgit investing in a chemical plant.

Redistribution of jia funds for investment purpose serves one important function: to increase jia financial security. Of the 674 residents at Huang Jia Shan, 47% or 316 were producer/income earners, of which only two worked for the government in low level jobs. Farmers, wage earners in the private sector, and self-employed workers do not enjoy pension funds for old age. The social welfare system in Malaysia has not developed to the extent that the care of the old and the disabled has become the responsibility of society. Among the Chinese, care for the old and the sick is still the responsibility of the jia group. Most investments are perceived as a security for future uncertainty, for old

age and for children's education funds.

Mr. Yap at the pekan has operated a dry goods grocery store for forty years. It was widely circulated that he has saved enough to have bought four houses under his name as quan zai ben (coffin and funeral fund). Lee Jie Fu now owns about 10 acres of rubber small holding. The income from the rubber holding supports his primary jia, and he and his wife consider this income as their security because children have their own spending, and remittance after they are married becomes irregular.

Tangible investment is for the jia as a group and this form of investment is often transferable. Land and houses can be bought and sold to meet immediate needs of the jia. For example, Mr. Wu sold his rubber small holdings for his children's education thirty years ago. In rural Chinese Malaysian communities, the concept of accumulation for the children still exists, but actual occurrence of inheritance and jia division is limited to a small portion of the population. Most jia have shallow genealogy and limited resources to divide after the death of the older generation.

Observable inheritance often comes in the form of a "means of production" which is directly related to the forms of production of the previous generation. Examples at Nan Mei and Huang Jia Shan show that inheritance affects the heir in terms of choice of

occupation. But it seldom becomes the limiting factor for the generation below the one inheriting it. The reasons can be traced to the availability of education and job opportunities.

Mr. Shaw at Nan Mei _pekan_ maintains the inherited grocery/herbal medicine business and one shop house, which he rented out for small business. Some of Mr. Shaw's children finished high school, and are working in the city "earning a good income," according to Mrs. Shaw. They will not continue their parents' grocery business because they have marketable skills which they would rather use to make a living. Lee Jie Fu of Huang Jia Shan inherited his father's rented farm land, and continued to be a vegetable farmer. All his children worked on the farm when the _jia_ was growing. After completing their education, which ranged from six years to 15 years, the children dispersed and diversified. Mr. Lee invested in 10 acres of rubber small holding, and he and his family's maintenance now rely on the income derived from the rubber small holding. If unsold by the time of his death, this piece of property will be given to his children. But the children have no intention of relying on or working on the rubber small holding. Mr. Lim and his brother inherited their father's grocery business at Nan Mei _pekan_. The younger Lim brother is hoping that soon he and his brother could divide the

inherited business so that he and his family could move to the city. Mr. Lien of Nan Mei is struggling to keep the inherited rubber middleman business going. He resents the fact that the inherited business tied him down, and wishes he could sell the business in order to venture into other business.

In analyzing the reasons why Mr. Lien, Mr. Lim, Mr. Lee and Mr. Shaw's generation maintain their father's occupations, and their children are unlikely to continue the jia primary occupation, it is discovered that there is a direct correlation between the level of education and the number of opportunities available. Mr. Lee of Huang Jia Shan has one year of education. He, like his father, worked on land. His seven children have 6 to 15 years of education. After his land was flooded, and his children obtained education, they left home to seek work in the city. When his brother-in-law had job opportunities open for his sons, three of Mr. Lee's children joined the maternal uncle. Mr. Shaw claimed to have nine years of Chinese education from China. He maintained his father's grocery/herbal medicine shop. His two sons have 13 and 9 years of English education which allows them to obtain jobs that require English language abilities. Both children obtained work in the city, leaving the father to maintain the inherited business. Children having better education than parents

is a tendency not only among people of _jia_ with inheritance. It is common among all residents in the three communities studied.

Cohen suggested that building up inheritance is the ultimate goal of a _jia_'s economy. _Jia_ investments are geared towards enriching the inheritable _jia_ estate (1976). The diminishing importance of inheritance in rural Malaccan _jia_ and the increasing investment in education lead me to conclude that education has replaced inheritance. Even though villagers are apprehensive about the value of education in terms of social mobility in Malaysia, education has replaced inheritance to become the "means of production," and _jia_ investment in education in varying degree often takes precedence over tangible investment.

b. Intangible Investment

Income pooling is directly related to the disposition of _jia_ labor. Redistribution of the pooled income for education is also closely related to the disposition of labor. Allowing a _jia_ member to obtain education means delaying the member's labor input in the _jia_ economy by the number of years of education. In addition to the time investment, there is the monetary investment as the _jia_ often has to pay from the _jia_ pooled income for the education for the duration labor is delayed. Though primary and secondary education in

government schools are free, additional expenses such as school bus fees, uniform and notebook fees, and other fees added together for three or four children can be substantial for a villager with limited resources. But education can be perceived as a form of human capital investment to be maximized for the good of the individual, and for the benefit of the jia. Some economists consider education as an investment in human capital incurred in the formal education system and through on-the-job training. This investment yields returns over the lifetime of the individual concerned (Schultz 1973:6; Caldwell 1978:570).

As mentioned earlier, in a jia economy where labor participation is necessary, the sooner a jia member joins the work force the more unpaid labor the jia can utilize. Education takes away five and a half hours a day from an average working youth's time, which may account for 50% of the average working time per youth per day. This is calculated based on an average eleven hours of gong (labor) farmers and shopkeepers usually put in if they work on their own farm or are self-employed. Lee Jie Fu's second son mentioned that a child can be counted for half a gong (labor), partly because of the amount of work a child can do, partly because of the time a child can put in if he goes to school the other half of the day. All his siblings began working on the parents' farm

the same time they began attending school, at the age of seven. Prolonged education prevents full participation of a jia member from working for the jia economy. Education can also be costly once children begin middle school, which is not available locally. Transportation for five children by school bus can cost about one fourth of a rubber tapper's monthly income.

As mentioned earlier, Lee Jie Fu of Huang Jia Shan invested heavily in his children's education. All his sons have at least seven years of schooling. Two sons finished secondary education, three other sons have college educations. Of the six Lee sons, they have an average of 11.8 years of education, which is 4.2 years more than the average years of education for a male in the 20 to 39 years old cohort. (Average years of education of male cohort between 20 and 39 as of 1986 at HJS was 7.56 years.) Among other things, it also resulted in the physical dispersion of the jia members. Their neighbor once lamented that "the Lee jia is disintegrated (san le)." Lee Jie Fu's affinal relative, Lee Long Jiu of Huang Jia Shan has two adult sons who have had only six years of primary school education. Mrs. Lee Jie Fu once commented on her children's getting more education than Lee Long Jiu's two sons, saying "Long Jiu has a much easier life than ours. At forty-seven, he is semi-retired." This reflects the dilemma a parent

faces: full participation of all _jia_ members in the _jia_ economy, or more education for individual children. The former benefits the _jia_ as a group in the short run, the latter benefits the individuals in the long run.

Decisions concerning education thus affect the redistribution of the _jia_ funds and the disposition of _jia_ labor. It is generally recognized by the local people that farming parents value education less than non-farming parents because traditional farming does not require literacy. Data show that 52.7% of Huang Jia Shan's households are engaged primarily in farming. 18% of male and 45% female farmers have 0 to 2 years of schooling, 87% male and 97% female farmers have less than eight years of schooling. Non-farming _jia_ generally invest more in education. Of the people working in wage jobs or self-employed, the level of education attainment is comparatively higher among both male and female. Average attainment of education at Nan Mei, a primarily non-farm based village is comparatively higher than Huang Jia Shan, a primarily farm based village.

Redistribution of the _jia_ fund on education and skill training can be seen as a form of investment in individual members of the _jia_. Discretion in the redistribution of education funds exists. In the past, this discretion was along gender lines. Male children were allowed to receive more education than female

children. Today, equality becomes more apparent. At the same time, because of wage employment opportunities and because female children tend to be more diligent in sending back remittance on a regular basis for a longer period of time than male children, the traditional perception of female children being pei qian huo (lost investment) is changing. Female children who are capable more often are allowed to attain higher education than male children. This trend is more apparent at Nan Mei.

I would argue that in a society where inheritance is not an essential part of family economic foundation, education takes the place of a form of early pre-mortem inheritance, to provide "capital" from the jia fund to individuals in order to enhance the success of jia members' economic and life pursuits. Rather than a tangible form of asset which is transferable, education is intangible, therefore, non-transferable. The benefit is therefore more for the individual than for the jia. Education investment works against jia income pooling and labor disposition at the stage when the investment is made. However, when the jia members enter the work force, income pooling resumes. In such cases, "delayed reciprocity" begins.

Diversification, out-migration, and financial independence are often the direct consequences of jia members receiving education. Jia members working away

from the _jia_ base alleviate the _jia_ in its support of these members on a daily basis. Remittance is often regular until the _jia_ member establishes his or her own household. This is especially true with daughters. Education prolongs the time during which daughters contribute to the _jia_ fund due to delayed marriage. Their income often forms the main source of their dowry. In the case of sons, economic independence before marriage often relieves the parents and the _jia_ group from contributing towards their wedding and the setting up of a new household.

When Lee Jie Fu's children left home to work in the capital city and in a northeastern state, it relieved Mr. and Mrs. Lee from supporting them on daily basis. In 1986, the only child staying home and being supported by the parents was their youngest son who was still in school. In 1982 when the third son returned home to get married, Mr. and Mrs. Lee hosted elaborate feasts. The cost of the feast was taken from the pooled _jia_ funds, contributed by the parents, the third son, and the other sons.

Education is a _jia_ investment for the benefit of the _jia_ group as well. In rural Chinese villages, it is still the pride of the parents to have children with "good" educations. In addition, being able to provide education to the children reflects the economic

conditions of the jia. A jia in need of labor and income cannot afford the luxury of redistributing limited resources to education even though public education is supported by the government.

Education benefits the individuals. In a familial based farm economy, an individual does not become independent until he inherits the land. Cohen suggested that an individual becomes a jural adult when he marries (1976). In rural Malacca jia with farm based economy, marriage used to mark the beginning of a man's adulthood as he took up the responsibility of supporting his own family. If he was participating in a familial mode of production, he might not be financially independent until the jia divided and the individual headed his own economic unit. In such cases, the division of the jia was the rite of passage that led an individual to economic independence. A female member became a jural adult when she became the mother of her husband's children. Cohen suggested that upon marriage, the dowry and the se koi (private conjugal fund) allow the wife to be financially independent. But in rural Malacca, such se koi or ci fang qian was probably of such an insignificant amount that a woman did not have any money of her own until her children started bringing back pocket money for her.

In 1986, however, education and wage income had begun to replace marriage and inheritance as the "capital" for adulthood, marked by financial independence. Living away from the *jia* base and earning an income gives the individual freedom and economic independence before marriage. The income often forms the capital for his or her marriage funds which used to be the responsibility of the parents.

In 1986, there was a wedding in the Wu *jia*. The youngest son was marrying a young woman who had been the main bread winner of her natal *jia* before getting married. A Lien owned a tailoring shop in a small town, and earned a good income. For her marriage, A Lien's father did not ask for a bride price, and did not give a dowry. He said that the skill his daughter had was her dowry for life. As for the bride price, A Lien asked that she be allowed to continue supporting her brother's education until he finished law school.

For a female to continue her financial responsibility towards the natal *jia* after her marriage is still uncommon. It is more common for sons to continue supporting the natal home after marriage. A Zhu's eldest brother works as a customs officer. He and his conjugal family have their own house and they live quite a long distance from his parental house. The father is retired but has several children still in

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school. A Zhu's eldest brother supports the parental family still today. A Zhu used to help support her father's jia. Now, she is married and has two children. She occasionally sends pocket money to her mother.

Caldwell suggested that the key issue in demographic transition is the "direction and magnitude of intergenerational wealth flows" or "the net balance of the two flows--one from parents to children and the other from children to parents" (Caldwell 1976:55-56). In a later article, Caldwell explained that the wealth flows include goods and money, labor and services, protection and guarantees, and social and political support (Caldwell 1978:553, 573). He hypothesized that the direction of wealth flow in primitive and traditional societies is from children to parents, which encourages high fertility. In a transitional society, however, due to economic, social, psychological and physiological causes, the direction of flow is reversed and the family size becomes smaller and the family reduces from extended to nuclear.

Of interest here is the direction of wealth flow in the jia in rural Malacca. First of all, wealth flow is not static. The jia, in its developmental stages, exhibits bi-directional wealth flow of different magnitude. Using White's terms (1980:19), during the early expansion stage when the children are not

producers, the direction of flow is often from parents to children. During the late expansion stage when the younger generation begins participating in production and income pooling, the direction can be from parents and working children to dependent members of the jia, which may include younger children who are in school, and other dependent members of the jia. Working children temporarily out of work reverse to be dependents. Retired parents and siblings who are born at the end of the parents' reproductive period may together become dependents of other working children. During the dispersal stage of the jia when adult children marry and establish their own households, the configuration of wealth flows may be simplified if the married children stop contributing to the parental jia and thus initiate an early expansion pattern of wealth flow in their own conjugal family. Or, if wealth flows between the married adult children and the parental jia continue, and if parents are still producers and have younger children to support, the flows can be complex. In this situation, the economic arrangements of the jia and its sub-conjugal family unit are intimately linked together.

Wealth flows are thus a dynamic summary of the directions of resource distribution in different stages of the jia development cycle. The directions can be quantified, but studies on the directions of wealth flow

have yet to be conducted because of difficulty involved in quantification. Observations in the three study sites indicate that in rural Malacca, the general model of wealth flow for the _jia_ begins from parents to children, and at the end of the three stage cycle, the direction reverses. This general model of wealth flow reflects the ideology of the _jia_ group, and it is reinforced by the fact that the _jia_ is a private social welfare institution. This in turn encourages the preference of the Chinese _jia_ for sons who are culturally designated as the providers of old age care.

But change is perhaps in sight. All the parents who were still working and producing in 1986 mentioned that their earning and savings would be their old age fund (_lao ben_ or _guan cai ben_). They believe their sons would care for them, but inevitably, they were making preparation for their own old age. With younger generations leaving land based _jia_ farms, or leaving _jia_ based small scale home businesses, and establishing separate households after marriage, and with wage earners out-migrating to other parts of the country and setting up household where jobs are, the likelihood of the persistence of the stem form of the _jia_ is diminishing, not due to the breakdown of the _jia_ ideology, but due more to the _jia_ economic arrangements. It may be possible that the new economic arrangement of the _jia_ may

lead to the gradual modification of the jia ideology.

A new social institutional development in the urban areas in 1986 was the mushrooming of private homes for the elderly. Working children in the city began to feel the burden of caring for elderly parents. This problem was especially acute among stem families where both the son and the daughter-in-law work. One response to this social problem was the opening up of private homes in residential areas as day-care centers for the aged. Some old folks remain at the home during the week-days and return to the son's house during weekends. Some stay for much longer periods. Whether such trends would spread to the rural Chinese villages in the near future is difficult to predict. When it happens, the jia ideology would have to face a challenge. As it was in 1986, the jia ideology remains the centripetal force that pulls the jia together. Villagers generally believe that only the destitute and those with no kinsmen in Malaysia would ever go to a lao ren yuan (old people's home), a government institution for the destitute with no traceable kin to support.

Networking and Reciprocity

Discussions so far have focused on the jia as a cohesive economically viable entity, that is self-sustained by its members, and self-replenishable through reproduction. In fact, the jia is not an isolate. It

has already been suggested that the physical and economic arrangements of the _jia_ are closely linked to the social, economic, and political environments; its cohesive ideology is reinforced by social pressure, both from within the Chinese community, and by the private social welfare system in Malaysia.

As an income pooling and resource sharing unit, the _jia_ is self reliant, but nonetheless, intimately tied in with other _jia_, through a network linked by kindred ties. General reciprocity ensures the bi-directional flow of resource pooling and sharing, in monitary terms, or in kind. Such pooling and sharing are most clearly demonstrated in time of life crisis, such as death, or time of celebration, such as marriage.

General reciprocity among the network of _jia_ can be compared to a credit system renowned in the Chinese business sector (T'ien 1953), which was prevalent during the pioneer stage of immigration for the recruitment of cheap labor briefly described in Chapter III. When a contribution is provided from one _jia_ to another, an equal quantity or quality of contribution will flow back to that _jia_ at a later time. The type of contribution is often defined by relationship between the donor and the receiver. This delayed reciprocity is expected, and sometimes budgeted in the general cost of an event.

The history of the Wu jia of Jin Cun has been described earlier. It is the center of a network that links several jia in Huang Jia Shan, Nan Mei, Sa Le, and other neighboring Chinese communities, among them the Lee Jie Fu jia, Lee Long Jiu jia of Huang Jia Shan, the Yap A Loi family of Nan Mei, Beautiful Lotus and her husband's conjugal family at Sa Le, and her natal jia in a community one mile away from Nan Mei. Mr. and Mrs. Liu of yet another community within the radius of two miles from Nan Mei are also part of this kindred network. The actual amount of resource flow among these jia over two generations is impossible to trace by an outsider, but is quite clearly remembered by the people involved. There is a notebook kept in one of the drawers of the altar table in the living room of the Wu jia, in which the contributions of relatives and guests during several jia events that involved gifts and contributions were recorded. The contributions were either in money, or in kind. It has been used as a reference book for the Wu jia to "know" the proper amount of li (gift) to send when another jia has a similar life event that calls for a li. Besides gifts and money, there are contributions of time and labor which are often expected from closer kindred. Such contributions are not recorded in books, but remembered in people's minds, as part of the relationship itself.

In 1979 when the Old Father Wu died, all the sons and their families gathered at the jia home to observe the funeral rite. Two married-out daughters also arrived. The mourning dresses had to be prepared for all the jia mourners, including nine sons, daughters, daughters-in-law, and nine grandchildren. All except the married-out daughters were then Wu jia members. Jia members and married-out daughters in deep mourning do not make their own mourning dresses. Mrs. Yap A Loi of Nan Mei, the adopted-out daughter of the Wus, a matrilateral cousin sister, and a young woman from the neighboring Tay jia sat in the back room working on the clothes. The Tay woman was an affinal relative of the Lee jia to which the eldest Wu daughter belongs. The sons' generation wears black, the grandson's generation wears indigo blue. Each individual has to have two sets of shirts and pants for the one hundred day mourning period. For three days and nights, three women made piles of black and blue mourning dresses from new cotton material voluntarily.

During the week when the Old Father's coffin was laid in state in the center of the front room, the jia altar was covered with white paper for the jia senior was in the liminal state of turning from a living member, to a wandering fierce ghost, to an ancestor. Everyday, kinsmen returned to give advice on the funeral rite and provide company to the mourners who were on vigil day and

night. The second daughter-in-law's father came, and instructed that the coffin should be moved slightly to align to a certain angle. Beautiful Lotus' father, who is a Wu whose father came from the same village in China as Old Father Wu, objected to the new alignment, saying the in-law was trying to manipulate the geomancy to benefit his son-in-law. The alignment of the coffin was corrected according to this kinsman's instruction, so that the eldest son would benefit. Years later, people still talked about the incident, and wondered if in fact, after all the trouble, which son actually benefited from the position of the coffin laid in state. Some said it was the third son.

On the day the coffin was to be buried, deep mourning jia members again had to rely on kinsmen for assistance. Young men from the Huizhou Huiguan (Hakka Speakers Association based in the city of Malacca) came to carry the coffin of a kinsman, related to all of them through extended descent relationship. The eldest Wu daughter's son, a member of the Lee jia, was instructed by the mother to join the young men. As kinsmen, these young men wore white with a red ribbon across the front. Their service was voluntary. Before the coffin was moved, a feast was prepared for the rite and to feed all the people helping the Wu jia. Caterers were hired to do the preparation. The costs was paid for by the mourning

jia, with the help of donations from the kindred and friends who felt the obligation to assist in raising the fund for the funeral. Another list of donations was thus recorded by the Wu jia, awaiting for a future event when an equal amount of li could be returned.

In 1986, the youngest brother of the Wu jia was getting married. The day before the wedding, all the married-out sisters and sisters-in-law returned home without being asked to. There was no telephone in any of the jia members' homes, but they arrived around noon, just in time to begin the preparation of food for the jia marriage ritual. Back in the kitchen, two sisters and three sisters-in-laws squatted around the jia well slaughtering live chickens and cleaning the feathers. Prayers require chickens with the head and the tail intact. Supermarket chickens cannot be used. The husband of the youngest sister made several trips from his home on bicycle to bring coconuts and cooking pots. This sister was adopted out as a xifu (young daughter-in-law) when she was a child. She contributed her time and assistance as a daughter would. Another adopted out daughter came to attend the feast the next day only as a guest. But she sent her two daughters to help in the kitchen on the day of the feast.

Monetary contributions come from kindred and friends, as credits, to help raise enough money to pay

for important life events of the _jia_. Contributions in kind flow from kindred to kindred as social obligations which are regulated by culturally defined rules. Both kinds of contributions, or credits, are expected to be returned at a later date. The _jia_ in this sense is part of a larger redistribution network organized on the principle of general reciprocity.

Jia Rituals

Jia rituals, like _jia_ economy, are an expression of the descent ideology that binds the _jia_ together. _Jia_ rituals support of the idea of the _jia_ as a group, and they reinforce its cohesion. _Jia_ rituals include an array of symbolic behaviors. Some of these rituals performed as rites of passage have been succinctly described and carefully analyzed by anthropologists, e.g., on ancestor worship (Wolf 1970;1976;1978; Ahern 1973; Freedman 1966;1967;1970; Newell 1962;1976; Harrell 1976); on marriage (Freedman 1953; M. Wolf 1973; Newell 1962). For the discussion of the symbolic expressions of the descent ideology, two types of rituals are of concern here: daily and annual rituals, and rites of passage.

Daily and Annual Rituals

Daily ritual in most _jia_ homes involves two types of worship: deity worship and ancestor worship. Every house I visited has an altar table in the main hall

facing the front door. But not all altar tables contain both the seats for the gods and the ancestors. Some newly constructed homes at Huang Jia Shan have only a statue of a certain god, usually pertaining to wealth, with the ancestor altar missing. One very old house at Huang Jia Shan has only the ancestor altar without any gods. At Nan Mei in the house where I lived for several months, there is the seat of the gods but not the ancestor's tablet. On the altar table, however, are two incense burners, one for the deities, the other for the ancestors. Before going into the reasons for these variations, I will first describe the arrangement found in most homes.

In rural Malacca, altars are seen in almost every house, and daily venerations are performed. Twice a day, at dawn and at dusk, one of the household members, usually a senior female, is seen outside the front door with lighted incense sticks in her hands. She shows a bowing gesture to the sky, and places one incense stick in the shrine on the wall just outside the door. She places another incense stick on each side of the door before returning to the front hall. Inside the front hall of the house, she bows to the altar and places one incense stick in each incense burner on the altar and one under the altar. The last stick belongs to the kitchen. This daily ritual was not seen performed by more than one

jia member living at the house at any one time. But all members are familiar with the practice, and when called upon, will perform it. This daily ritual is more elaborate on the first day and the fifteenth days of the lunar calendar.

At Nan Mei in the house where I lived, five deities and the ancestors are worshipped daily. Outside the front door on the left wall is a red wooden shrine. It consists of a rectangular back board with a ledge extending outward from the bottom. On the board is written "Receiving blessing: Blessing from the God of Heaven. Heavenly god descends to this honored house, blessings fill the prosperous hall." On the ledge are an incense burner, three red tea cups, and two candle stands. This is the shrine of the God of Heaven, _Tian Gong_, who protects the peace of the house and the well-being of the people. On both sides of the doorway there is a seat of the door god. It is symbolized by a red wooden cup-like incense holder with "prosperity" engraved on it. The door god guards the door, to ward off any evil that may pass the doorway. Entering the main hall, directly facing the door against the wall is an altar table. In the center on the wall is a piece of red paper with the title of several gods written on it to symbolize the seat of the gods. In front of the red paper are two incense burners, the larger one is for the gods, the

smaller one to the right is for the ancestors. No ancestor tablet is seen on the altar at this house. Ancestor tablets in the rural villages are of very modest form. Like the seat of the gods, it is often represented by a piece of paper with Chinese characters written in brush calligraphy, stating the seat of the ancestors of the surname of the jia. The usual place for the ancestor's seat is to the right of the gods, inferior in status, and usually much smaller. In front of the burners are three red tea cups. On both sides of the incense burners are two red candles. To the left of the candles is an oil lamp. The altar table is called shen zuo (the seat of the deity). The gods and ancestors are worshipped here. The gods are the resident protectors of the house. Under the altar table sitting on the floor is the seat of the Tu Di (the earth god). The seat of the earth god is marked by a red wooden shrine, similar to the shrine seen outside the door for the God of Heaven. On the back board is written "Dragon god of five directions, prosperity god of land of the Chinese and the foreign barbarians. Wealth pouring in from all directions, assistance coming from all peoples." On the ledge are an incense burner, five tea cups and two candle holders on both sides of the burner. At the back of the house is the kitchen. On the back wall of the kitchen is the red shrine of the kitchen god. The shrine and the

arrangement on its ledge resemble that of the god of Heaven outside the front of the house. The wording on the red wooden plaque reads "In charge of order: kitchen god of blessing. Virtuous takes charge of the fire, selflessness reaches the heaven." The kitchen god watches the behavior of the _jia_ members and is believed to make a report about the people in the house he resides in to heaven at the end of each lunar year. For about a week each year, when he goes to heaven, he will be absent from the house. Each god and the ancestors receive equal respect in the worship routine. Newell in his 1962 study of the Teochew Chinese of Malaysia had a similar description of these deities at home (1962:92ff). The interpretation of some of the gods of his study site differs from that of mine.

(DIAGRAM 11)

In the Yap house, Mrs. Yap is usually the person who performs the daily ritual, being the most senior female of the house. Mrs. Yap makes sure that each incense burner gets a new stick of incense at each prayer time. At night, the oil lamp on the altar is lit through out the night. When all lights are turned off, the yellow glow from the oil lamp provides warmth and security to the hall. The oil lamp also serves as a night light. On the first and the fifteenth days of the month, a plate of fresh fruit is placed at each shrine

and on the altar for the gods. Candles are also lit on these two days. When Mrs. Yap is busy or when she is bu ganjing (polluted, menstruating), other members of the household, sometimes one of her daughters, sometimes Mr. Yap, or her only son, will be called upon to take over the worship.

The general functions of the gods worshipped at home are to maintain order and to provide assistance to the people who invited them to reside in their home. All the gods worshipped at home have to be invited from the temples by the members of the group occupying the house. The group can be a jia group, or a branch of the jia that has physically separated from the original jia old house. In the latter case, there is often the absence of the ancestor seat on the altar. The resident god or gods on the altar can be the same as those worshipped at the old house, or a different god or gods can be chosen. Gods, once installed, are worshipped by one of the members of the house twice a day, and protection and blessings extend to all the members of the group as well as to the physical structure where they are housed.

Almost every house has the god of Heaven, the door god, Tu Di, and the kitchen god. Variations are seen on the altar. The altar is for the resident god(s) and the ancestors, with the ancestor taking a secondary place on the altar, to the right of the resident god(s).

In some homes, the ancestors are not present on the altar because their _shen wei_ (seat) is located in the _jia_ original home, usually the eldest male descendant of the line's residence. In some other cases, the altar is occupied by the ancestor's _shen wei_ alone. Lee Jie Fu's house now has the Goddess of Mercy at the center of the altar. To its left is the seat of the ancestors. For a long time, there was only the ancestors' seat (_shen wei_). Mrs. Lee mentioned that her father-in-law had worshipped a variety of gods on the altar. When the house was under renovation, she and her husband decided that since they had little idea about the gods worshipped, they would send the gods back to heaven and stop worshipping them. To do so, they went to the local temple to ask gods for permission. (This act is usually performed by incense burning, presenting the request to the deity, followed by throwing two pieces of hemi-spherical wood in front of the deity. If the wood pieces show a "head" and a "tail," assent is obtained. If assent is not given at the first throw, the same question can be rephrased and the wood pieces are thrown again. Description of this act is also found in Newell 1962:97, 114.) When assent was obtained at the temple, they carefully took the piece of red paper on which the names of the gods were written from the altar wall to their front yard. The red paper was burned, symbolically sending the gods back to heaven.

When the new house was finished, Mrs. Lee only had the ancestors' seat at the main altar. The ancestors include the patrilineal Lee ancestors in general who lived and died in China, and the parents of her husband who died in Malaysia.

When Mrs. Lee's children grew up and began to leave home to work in the cities, upon the urging of her daughter, Mrs. Lee installed the Goddess of Mercy on the main altar. She went to the local temple to ask permission from the Goddess first. When permission was granted, Mrs. Lee bought from the temple a red paper with the name of Goddess of Mercy written on it. The paper was officially dotted at the temple. The dotting installs the Goddess on the paper which now represents the Goddess. The Goddess was brought back home and placed in the center of the altar on the wall. Mrs. Lee placed an incense burner in front of the Goddess. Since then, the Lee jia worships Goddess of Mercy, and Mrs. Lee has been in charge of the daily ritual. The ancestors' shen wei is still on the altar, but receding to the minor place on the Goddess's right. Mrs. Lee takes a vegetarian meal on the first and the fifteenth days of the month because the Goddess is a vegetarian. The Goddess of Mercy ensures peace and safety (ping an) to the members of the jia, and the house where the jia lives.

The central altar can accommodate additional gods. At Mr. Tay's house at Nan Mei, there are three gods worshipped at the central altar. Mr. Tay's late mother used to worship Guan Gong, God of Wealth and Justice. When he rebuilt the house after the mother died, Goddess of Mercy was added to the altar. His son won the lottery recently and began a business. This son installed an additional god, Da Bo Gong, a wealth god commonly worshiped by people doing business. They also added three miniature statues of the three gods in front of the names of the gods on the wall.

At Mr. Wu's house, Jade God and a variety of other gods were worshipped in the past. One of the sons became ill and required long term medical care. Upon the suggestion of a friend, Mrs. Wu sent all the gods back to heaven, and then installed Goddess of Mercy at the central altar on the wall. She then added a statue of Tian Di (Heaven God) in front of Goddess of Mercy. These two gods share the same incense burner. To the right of the main incense burner is a smaller burner dedicated to another goddess, Tian Gou Niang, installed upon the advice of the people of the same temple. No statue nor written name was added to the altar when the latter was installed. The ancestors' seat used to be to the right of the jia gods. A year ago, the ancestors' shen wei was moved from the center hall to the dining area at the back

of the house. Mrs. Wu explained that this was for the convenience of placing food at the shen wei during ancestor worship on special dates. In addition, the late father-in-law would be closer to the jia members at every meal.

Additional deities worshipped by the jia can sometimes be found outside the house. Local residents are aware of the existence of the native spirits of the land, the datuk. The datuk (Malay, senior male) is recognized by the Chinese as sheng shen (the raw, undomesticated spirits) of the local soil. They usually occupy the uncultivated jungles and virgin land. Some are still wandering along the edge of farmland closer to the jungle, or in the rubber estates. They are feared and worshipped extensively by timber contractors and land developers in an effort to appease the original resident gods and ghosts of the land. There is a Sri Bunvyinian shrine at the Da Bo Gong temple near Nan Mei. She is a female counterpart of the datuk, and legend has it that she and the Chinese god of earth, Da Bo Gong, were good friends. Both Sri Bunvyinian and Da Bo Gong are worshipped side by side under two big trees outside the temple building. The red shrines along urban roads, in the middle of rural rubber estates, along the edge of paddy fields, and at the timber extraction sites in the jungles are all dedicated to the local datuk. At Nan

Mei, three of these shrines are observed.

Mrs. Chu has two such shrines side by side to the right front of her house. At night, the yellow oil lamp lights beaming from the shrine warm the anxious hearts of passers-by. Mrs. Chu explained that a few years ago her _jia_ was disturbed (_bu ping an_). Her children were ill and she was often sick. She consulted with the gods in a temple and was advised that there was a _datuk_ in a tree near her house, who was not housed and was causing all the disturbance at her home. Mrs. Chu asked a relative who was a mason to build a shrine for the _datuk_ as its resting place. The small shrine, in the shape of a miniature single-roomed temple building, has its door facing Mrs. Chu's house. Inside the shrine there is a piece of yellow cloth covering the upper part of the wall. In front of the yellow cloth there are three tea cups, an oil lamp, and a plate of fresh fruit. Mrs. Chu lights the oil lamp every night for the _datuk_. This shrine was also used to form a barrier between the house and the tree that was "not in harmony with" the house. Mrs. Chu said after the shrine was built, her children were well but she was still ill. One of her daughters had a dream that there was another _datuk_ who was homeless and needed a shelter. So, Mrs. Chu paid her mason relative to build another shrine annexed to the first shrine for the other wondering _datuk_. Then the

house was peaceful, according to Mrs. Chu. She said, "This kind of thing is hard to believe or disbelieve. But peace of the jia was restored."

Another datuk shrine is seen in front of a motor repair shop located at the junction where the main road branches into two forks. It was said that the shop lot belonged to a Malay owner and was always rented to Chinese to do business. Three people had previously rented this lot and all had gone broke. The present owner built a red brick shrine at the front of the shop to block the evils coming directly from the main road.

Mrs. Shaw of Nan Mei said once a god is installed, the jia inherits it and worships it generation after generation. Like the ancestors, gods require continuous worship so that "the smoke of the incense continues."

Gods are communal property. They are shared by all devotees who believe in their power and they can be present in various symbolic forms on many altars simultaneously. Gods are impermanent. Their resident status at any one home depends on the needs and wishes of the people occupying the home. The ancestors, on the other hand, are the exclusive property of the patrilineal descendants, and are permanent. Each jia group has its own ancestors; they are inherited from the past generations, and will be joined by all the male

descendants and their spouses in the future. Ancestors demand continuous veneration by their living descendants. The worship of ancestors is thus an obligation, not a choice.

When the *jia* remains physically as a group, the ancestors are worshipped on the main altar of the *jia*. Twice a day, an incense stick is burned and placed in the incense burner in front of the symbolic tablet of the ancestors. In rural Malacca, the symbolic tablet is often in the form of a piece of paper with the wording: all ancestors of the surname X. When a recently deceased *jia* member joins the rank of the ancestors, he or she joins the collective symbolic tablet with the rest of the ancestors. The extent of this practice requires more data before a broader generalization can be made. (Elsewhere in the literature one finds diverse descriptions of tablets: in the form of a wooden box containing strips of wood, each with the name and birth-death dates of the ancestors recorded, each strip representing one ancestor; or in the shape of a wooden stand with name and birth-death dates of the ancestor written on it; or a wood stand containing all the names and dates of ancestors written on the stand. See Freedman, Wolf, Ahern, Harrell, and Newell cited above.)

If some of the *jia* members establish new residence outside the old home, the ancestors usually

remain at the old home and are worshipped daily by the _jia_ members residing in the old home. _Jia_ members branched out from the main house do not perform the daily ritual for the ancestors at individual altars. At Nan Mei in the house I described above, however, an incense burner was brought to the branch house from the old house to allow the branch members to perform daily worship of the recently deceased. In order to do so, the incense ash of the original incense burner for the ancestors is ritually transferred to a new burner, with the permission from the ancestors. The permission is obtained by way of throwing the divination wood pieces. The ancestor burner at the branch house is dedicated to the mother of the four Yap brothers, who died two years ago. The tablet or _shen wei_ of the late mother is at the old house only a block away where the eldest of the four Yap brothers lives.

Most anthropologists differentiate the act of ancestor worship from god worship. Yang (1967) considered the former as a domestic ritual, and the latter a public ritual. Yang, from a functionalist's point of view, saw Chinese classic religion (or folk religion, to differentiate it from Western world religions which have formalized rituals and doctrines, and one main god) serving to preserve social organization. Ancestor worship preserves the reciprocal

relationship between the living and the ancestors. Wolf (1978), in a similar vein, considered ancestor worship as a domestic relationship, while god worship was a political relationship. Wolf suggested that the relation between ancestors and descendants is reciprocal, mutually dependent, and permanent. Ancestors need their descendants to care for them, and the descendants need their ancestors to listen to their appeals and bestow favors, just as the gift of life itself evokes the obligation for the receiver of life to offer care to the giver of life. But ancestors are not as powerful as the gods. The gods are like officials in an upper world. The motive to worship gods is to gain sympathy and assistance. Gods, like officials, are not obliged to grant favors. Therefore, they need to be negotiated with, using promises and worship. Vows must be fulfilled to ensure future assistance. If one god does not listen, another god can be sought. Like ancestors who have the personality of the living, gods have the characteristics of officials. They can inflict misfortune as well as fortune on the living.

Freedman views the two kinds of worship as the same act (1953:221). The Chinese in Singapore used the same word, <u>bai</u>, for gods and for ancestors. This was also observed during my stay in Malaysia. In the daily act of worship, rural Chinese talk about <u>bai Tian Gong</u>,

bai shen, bai baba, bai mama, bai na-duk (worship god of heaven, worship gods in general, worship the late father, worship the late mother, worship local earth god). The incense sticks are lighted at the same time; and the act of worship is performed in sequence, from the front of the house to the back of the house. Gods and ancestors receive equal number of incense sticks at each act of veneration, and are not differentiated in the daily ritual act. The only difference in the act is the marking of special dates. The gods are given special treatment in terms of fruits, candles, and sometimes large incense sticks on the first day and the fifteenth days of each month. Ancestors, especially late parents, receive special feasts on death anniversaries, festivals (da rizi), and other jia rites of passage.

Though the daily worship rituals of the ancestors and the gods appear to be similar in action, data from the villages reaffirm Wolf's suggestion that the motivations and the latent functions of the actions are different.

God worshipping is motivated by the constant quest for ping an (peace and security) and wealth. According to an eighty-two year old farm woman of Huang Jia Shan, whether one becomes rich or not is in one's fate (ming sui). People pray to gods in order to have ping an. Only with ping an will a person be able to

enjoy the wealth heaven bestows. At her house, there is the god of Heaven outside the door, and the ancestor's shrine on the main altar. According to her, the god of Heaven is a must in every house. This particular god provides ping an, and that is all she wants from gods and thus no other gods are needed on the altar. The emic view of the man-god relationship, according to Lee Long Jiu, a farmer at Huang Jia Shan with six years of education, is the same as the relationship between men. He stated that "ni dui wo hao, wo ye dui ni hao." (You treat me well, I reciprocate.) People pray (bai) for peace (ping an). Peace brings prosperity and wealth. Lee Long Jiu believes that if one is righteous and does not do wrong, even if he does not pray, god will reward him. This view is echoed by many.

With gods, there is a lack of sense of total loyalty. If one god does not provide favor, another god may. Gods have different principle domains and differential powers which, if combined properly, might provide a more complete protection to the worshippers. Many homes thus have several gods on the same altar. The most popular gods on the domestic altar seem to be Goddess of Mercy and Da Bo Gong. The former is believed to be generally related to peace and health. She is most welcome by homes with young children, pregnant women and the aged. Equally important to the rural villagers is

wealth. Da Bo Gong is regarded by the people in these villages as the god that brings in money. People engaged in business worship Da Bo Gong in particular. I found more Da Bo Gong in the two New Villages than the number of jia actually engaged in business activities. Besides Da Bo Gong, Guan Gong, the god of righteousness, is also widely worshiped. He is considered to be another god of wealth. Goddess of Mercy, Da Bo Gong and Guan Gong are worshipped side by side on the Tay jia altar. Perhaps the descendants of Chinese immigrants coming to Malaya never forget the initial goal of early immigration: making money.

Jia gods are not permanent. Domestically worshipped gods can be inherited from the ancestors and be passed on to descendants, "so that the incense smoke from the incense burner continues on." But examples from the field also show that the main altar gods can be invited into the jia, and sent back to heaven; new gods can replace the old ones, additional gods can join the rank of original gods. Each newly established conjugal family, if living in a different house, can install a god or gods of its own choice on its main altar.

Ancestors, on the other hand, require singular loyalty from their own descendants. Ancestors are permanently attached to the jia. Once installed, the ancestor cannot be sent back to heaven or replaced by

another. In homeland China, tablets of ancestors of several generations back can be removed to be permanently placed at the lineage ancestral hall to be worshipped there annually. In urban Malaysia, even recently deceased ancestors can be permanently placed in a temple to be worshipped by the temple caretakers on regular basis. In the village, however, ancestors live with the living patrilineal descendants, almost always in the same house where they used to live. They are remembered and treated as if they were living among the descendants, only watching from the altar table.

Some anthropologists suggest that ancestors are benevolent and do not punish at all (Hsu 1963:45). Ahern challenged the view and offered data from her fieldwork to show that ancestors can be capricious and malevolent (1973). Freedman described the Chinese ancestors as essentially benign and considerate, but occasionally punitive if provoked (1967). Wolf in his 1978 article appeared to agree more with Ahern than with Freedman. Most villagers would probably agree with Freedman's interpretation, and add to it the personality of the ancestors as they remember them in life. Ancestors are benevolent, but can be punitive, just like the old father or the old grandfather used to be. Descendants are obliged to pay respect to them, care for their welfare, and seek their approval and confirmation in major life

decisions. The only time an ancestor is feared is during the liminal stage when the recently departed member of the jia is in the process of changing into an ancestor. During this liminal stage, the soul of the newly departed is said to be dangerous. It has to be called out of its room by the priest-monk (a specialist) and captured into a special seat where it remains until the transformation is complete. Only after the process will the dead become an ancestor. A brief description is presented in Newell (1962:220).

Often, the more recently deceased ancestors are better remembered and their death days more elaborately celebrated. In rural villages, due to shallow genealogy and immigrant status, residents often have little personal experience with ancestors buried in the homeland in China. Their main loyalty is given to one or two generations of ancestors who lived and died in Malaysia. This is evidenced by the terms used by jia members when addressing the ancestors. In the Wu jia, during festivities, young children are instructed to bai gonggong (pray to the late grandfather), rather than bai zuzong (pray to ancestors in general) even though the grandfather and the general Wu ancestors share the same "tablet" or shen wei. The grandfather died seven years ago, and he is within the memory of younger grandchildren. His presence is felt by all the members

of the jia especially on important calendrical dates. The new bride of Wu jia, upon entering the groom's house on the wedding day, was instructed first to bai baba mama (pray to the late father and mother). The immediate ancestors of the jia are actively involved in the life events of the jia members. No specific reference is made to general ancestors during any jia rites of passage or daily rituals. But they are on the altar, with the immediate ancestors.

Gods are for everyone to worship. Ancestors are only the responsibility of their patrilineal descendants. The descent ideology is expressed in the definition of who can worship whom, and in return, who will look after the welfare of whom. In daily ritual, though the act of worship is the same for gods and ancestors, a boundary is clearly marked in ancestor worship, but not in the worship of gods.

Freedman suggested that because of the potential danger involved in ancestor worship, the female members take up the worship responsibility to protect the males from the danger (1970:174). Freedman also suggested that females take charge of the domestic rites while the males perform public rites (1953:224; 1970:173). My observation questions the applicability of Freedman's interpretations to local ritual behavior of the Chinese. I would suggest that the ritual behavior of the female in

daily rituals is an extension of the behavior expected of the female members of the _jia_. In the _jia_, the male descendant takes up the responsibility of caring for the parents. In practice, the daughters-in-law perform the physical care of the parents-in-law when they are living. Female members have been observed to be the ones who perform the daily rituals at home. On festive days and anniversaries, the food for the worship is prepared by the female members. It seems reasonable to conclude that the worship of ancestors, especially the recently deceased, is an extension of the obligation of the daughter-in-law. While all _jia_ members have a general obligation towards their parents and ancestors, it is the duty of the female members of the _jia_ to phvsically care for their well-being in this world, and to provide for their welfare in the other world.

The most senior son and grandson lead the grave site worship on _Qing Ming_ grave visits. Men and boys also perform daily rites in the home. At Nan Mei, I observed husbands and sons burning the incense in the evenings. Males can be asked to help the female members when they are menstruating, pregnant, or simply too busy at the time the ritual is supposed to be carried out.

Daily rituals at home as described above are not a collective behavior because they are performed by individual members for the group. Although the receiver

of the benefits from daily bai (prayer) is the jia group or the domestic unit, daily rituals lack the power of reinforcing agnatic solidarity. In rural Malacca, rituals for collective agnatic solidarity are limited to the occasions when all jia members gather together to perform joint activities. These occasions include the Qing Ming grave cleaning rite, the death anniversaries of the recently dead, and the Chinese New Year. In some jia, a few other calendrical festivals such as the Moon festival, and the festival of the hungry ghosts also draw members to the jia home.

The aspect that shows jia solidarity is not necessarily the bai (ritual worship) involved on these occasions. For example, on Chinese New Year's eve, specially prepared food will be placed on separate tables before the god of Heaven, the gods on the altar, and the ancestors. Larger candles will be burned on the altar. The senior male of the jia may be the one burning the incense; however, the worship act itself, like daily ritual, is individual oriented. Members of the jia are supposedly all gathered at the jia home, but they usually go about their own business when the ritual ceremony is going on, performed by one or another person. Wives and daughters are probably busy in the kitchen making additional dishes for the feast after the bai is completed. It is more likely the feast itself that

symbolically represents group solidarity. All jia members sit in the dining area around one, two, or three tables and feast on the food jointly prepared by all the female adults. Guests are seldom invited for the New Year's eve dinner as everyone goes to his or her own jia home to celebrate this occasion.

It is important to point out that it is not the feast itself that draws a group of agnatic descent related people together. Behind the feast is the principle that only agnates descended from the same ancestors and their spouses get together for the same feast. Descent defines membership at such jia gatherings. Occasions such as the Chinese New Year, like Thanksgiving in the U.S., create the opportunity to allow the demonstration of group sentiment. Through participation in the occasion, membership is identified, and solidarity reinforced.

Beyond the confines of the jia home, the only noticeable joint ritual is the annual Qing Ming grave site worship. On a selected weekend before the date of Qing Ming, which almost always falls on April 5th on western calendars, agnatic descendants of the ancestors whose graves are in Malaysia convene at the grave site. Most ancestors are buried at huiguan (common dialect based association) owned cemeteries. Therefore, each territorial/dialect group often has its own yi shan

(mountain of justice, or common cemetery). The _huiguan_ does not sponsor joint prayers at the _yi shan_. Grave site worship is more a private, individual _jia_ event, performed before or on the date of _Qing Ming_.

A particular ancestor may have descendants all still living under one roof, or they may have established separate households. In any case, the _Qing Ming_ rite is performed jointly by all agnatic descendants. At Wu _jia_, for instance, the two dispersed Wu brothers and their families return to the _jia_ home, usually the weekend before the big day (_da rizi_). Women (daughters-in-law) prepare prayer food early in the morning. One set of food will be placed in front of the ancestors' altar at home, the other set brought to the cemetery for the prayer. The food always consists of boiled whole chicken, boiled whole pork, and sweet cakes. The _jia_ home prayer in front of the _jia_ altar is performed first. The eldest Wu brother of the _jia_ burns the incense and lights the candles after the food is placed in front of the altar. The food for the cemetery is placed in a bamboo basket, with tea, red tea cups, candles, and incense. The four brothers and their conjugal families ride in three or four cars to the cemetery. The narrow unpaved road leading to the cemetery at this time of the year is always crowded with packed cars. The scene described by the late Tang Chinese poet Du Mu, with

people walking in the spring rain carrying prayer food in bamboo baskets on two ends of a bamboo pole is no longer familiar to villagers (Du Mu's "Qing Ming"):

Qing Ming drizzle,

Laden with sorrow, people walking

In 1986, the three family cars did not arrive at the cemetery together because of traffic. The eldest and the third Wu brothers and their families reached the parents' grave first. Their six children began cleaning the place by removing the weeds and placing colored paper on their paternal grandparents' grave. The eldest brother and his eldest son repainted the names on the tombstone with fresh gold paint. When food was placed in front of the grave, the youngest brother and the eldest Wu sister joined the group. She brought along two red paper boxes with paper money, paper clothes and paper shoes in each, to burn for her natal parents. There was a paper umbrella in one of the boxes for the late father. No one got to see the inside of the boxes. The Wu sister ordered them with specifications from a shop in town that specializes in ritual goods. The grave site ritual is usually a descent group specific activity. Married-out daughters go to their husbands' ancestors' graves to pray. The eldest Wu sister came because the rite on her husband's side had been completed a few hours earlier. Perhaps she arranged it that way so that she could join

her brothers at the Wu ancestors' grave. She came alone, without taking any Lee _jia_ members with her.

Among all the motions of talking, cleaning, burning, pouring tea, offering incense sticks, the prayers were said and the ritual accomplished. The _jia_ group collected the tea cups and the food before leaving the ancestors. The _jia_ group went to search for a distant agnatic relative's grave, but failed to find it for no one remembered exactly where that distant agnatic relative's grave was located. They went to place incense sticks on a new grave of a maternal relative who used to live in the Wu _jia_ before finally heading home. All the while, the second Wu brother and his conjugal family were lost in the traffic jam. They were forced to perform a separate prayer without the food at the grave site. In the afternoon, a _jia_ feast was prepared, using the food prepared for the ancestors but cooked again with additional sauces and vegetables.

Qing Ming grave site prayer is only obligatory for the _jia_ members. Married-out daughters are not obligated to participate. The act of praying, like the prayer in front of the _jia_ altar earlier on the same date, lacks group uniformity in action. But the occasion is marked by the presence of all _jia_ members for a similar purpose, to _sao mu_ (sweep the grave, visit the ancestors). The only action which does demonstrate group

uniform behavior is again the feast around the dinner table after the grave site visit. In 1986 at the Wu jia, all the sixteen members of the Wu jia were at the dinner table. The two married-out sisters and one married-out adopted granddaughter ate at their husbands' home.

Rites of Passage

Besides the daily ritual and the annual rituals on Qing Ming at the grave site, on Chinese New Year, and on several other calendrical dates and anniversaries, other symbolic behaviors that reflect the jia as a descent group are seen at rites of passage, which are generally performed in the jia home. Two of these rites will be discussed here, marriage and funeral. Variations of these rites are present between dialect groups, and among individual jia. The examples described below came from one Hakka jia. They are used to demonstrate the jia descent ideology in action. As marriage and funeral rites are often lengthy and complex, only the symbolic acts that contribute to the discussion will be mentioned in detail below.

A. Marriage Rite

Marriage among the Chinese in rural Malacca involves the incorporation of a female member into the jia group. Marriage in southeastern China was described as a means to establish alliance between lineages. In

the rural Malacca Chinese community, marriage establishes formal links between two jia. Together with the formal links on the jia level, there will be a network of affinal relatives who are incorporated into the jia kindred through the "traffic" of one new bride (Freedman 1970:180).

Marriage in the Chinese rural community is becoming somewhat more personal. Almost all the marriages in recent years that I have observed were the result of self selection rather than match-making. But the marriage itself is still a jia affair, not the affair of two individuals.

While marriage partners tend to be self selected, marriage arrangements still involve the jia authorities of two jia groups. Traditionally, before the marriage is agreed upon by the groom's jia, the birth date and time of the bride, the ba zi, is brought to the groom's jia altar to be presented to the ancestors for approval (Freedman 1970;1953). If within three to five days, nothing destructive happen at the jia, such as quarrels among members, sickness, death of domestic animals, breaking of dishes, this lack of misfortune serves as ample indication of ancestral consent. This procedure is not commonly performed in rural Malacca. The physical appearance, education, personality, and other personal characteristics will be much discussed by

the jia members of the potential bride and groom. But serious objections will be expressed only if the Chinese zodiac signs of the mates are not in "harmony." A tiger female is still gravely disliked by the male jia side for it is believed that the tiger female will be dominating, and will "eat" the male unless his sign happens to be a dragon, the only other animal that can control the tiger. Harmony between the bride and groom, and harmony between the two jia are the major concerns of a marriage. This harmony upholds the patrilineal male dominance ideology.

In the process of a marriage arrangement, the jia authority on the male side negotiates with the jia authority of the female side, sometimes through a mediator. During this process, suggestions and advice are exchanged, and sometimes conflicts and quarrels arise. The bride and the groom-to-be often can influence the final decision. But the final decision is always presented to the other party in the words of the jia authority. When Mr. Huang's daughter was to be married to the second son of the Wu jia, the daughter objected strongly to the acceptance of a pin jin (bride price), much to her father's displeasure. To settle the conflict between the father and the daughter, representing the traditional and the modern respectively, Mr. Huang decided to ask for 2,000 ringgit pin jin from the Wu jia, but let the daughter bring a check of 1999.99 ringgit to

the groom's home on the day of marriage as part of her dowry from the Huang jia. The one cent was a token that has to be received by the bride's jia from the groom's jia.

The bride used to be accompanied to the groom's home by a dowry, which consisted of supplementary furniture for the bed room, utensils for the kitchen, and money and jewelry for the bride's private fund. The male side provides the pin jin, other gifts, and pays for the wedding costs and the essential furniture in the new couple's room. The male jia has to have the wedding fund before a son can be married. A poor farming jia has to delay male children's marriage, or exchange daughters for little daughters-in-law to minimize the wedding cost. With both male and female children becoming income earning producers before marriage, the role of the jia in financially sponsoring the marriage is diminishing. As mentioned earlier, the young producers' savings replace the jia fund, at least partially, in paying for the wedding costs. This saving can be considered as a form of early transfer of the jia fund into the individual's private fund.

Marriage involves formal leave-taking of the bride from her natal jia to enter her husband' jia. The formal leave-taking is marked by the bride offering incense in front of the jia altar, to the jia gods and to

the ancestors. Ancestors are thus formally informed of the leaving of a member of the jia. A formal feast is often prepared by the bride's jia for its relatives. Then the bride bids goodbye to her own parents and siblings before leaving her natal jia to go to her future jia in the company of the representatives of the groom's jia and representatives of the bride's jia. In the past, a representative of the bride's jia ran after the sedan chair and poured a bowl of water on or behind the sedan chair as it was leaving, to symbolize the permanency of the leaving. Just as poured-out water could never be retrieved back to the bowl, this married-out daughter would not return as a jia member to the natal home again. During this journey, the bride was in a liminal state, not belonging to any jia group. She was locked ritually in the sedan chair and was given special charms to ward off possible evil spirits. These two acts have been omitted now-a-days. M. Wolf in her description of marriage in northern Taiwan in the late 1960s still reported the kicking of the taxi that carried the bride by the bride's jia member as a symbolic act of severing ties with the married-out daughter (1972).

Upon entering the new jia, the bride is received by the groom's parents and is asked to pray to the gods and the ancestors of the new jia. This is symbolically performed by offering an incense stick in the burners of

the gods and the ancestors on the jia altar. When this is completed, the bride is formally accepted into the husband's jia.

Jia harmony is at crisis when a stranger enters the jia. When the bride enters the new jia, all the female adult members of the jia, especially all the sisters-in-law, must hui bi (avoid seeing each other and hide) in the back rooms of the house to avoid chong (direct confrontation) until the bride is formally accepted into the jia in front of the altar.

To ensure future harmony in the new jia, the bride is formally accepted by the jia members, as witnessed by the jia ancestors. Tea is symbolically offered by the bride to her parents-in-law first, then to all the jia members more senior than the new couple. After that, tea is offered to relatives of the new jia who are senior to the bride and the groom. In 1986 when the fourth son of the Wu jia was getting married, both parents-in-law were already dead. This tea ceremony was performed in front of the ancestors' altar in the dining area, to be witnessed by the late parents-in-law whose ancestor seat had been moved to this room. Tea was first offered by the couple to the late parents-in-law on the altar. Then, it was offered to all jia members in the order of seniority: eldest brother and his wife, second brother and his wife, third brother and his wife. Tea

was also offered to the married-out eldest sister and her husband. The tea was drunk symbolically and a present in the form of an <u>hong bao</u> (a small red envelope with cash enclosed) was placed in the bride's hand, when the tea cup was returned to the bride, as a <u>jian mian li</u> (welcoming token). This act was witnessed by the ancestors, in particular the recently deceased parents-in-law.

M. Wolf in her vivid description of a Taiwanese farm family emphasized the conflicting interests of the family members, which eventually brought about the separation of the family into subunits (1968). In another study on the life of Taiwanese women, Wolf proposed that the self-interest of the daughter-in-law for her own conjugal family and her uterine family (mother-children bond) is an important psychological force within the family. Wcmen try to strengthen the uterine family in order to gain power within the family she marries into. The daughter-in-law in each generation repeats the same cycle, trying to build up a place for herself in her husband's family, until in old age she becomes the matriarch of her own family when she outlives her husband (1972). Conflicts among sisters-in-law are not difficult to find among the <u>jia</u> in rural Malaccan villages. Some divisions of the <u>jia</u> as an economic unit were said to be attributed to the quarrelsome sisters-in-

law. The symbolic avoidance of female jia members meeting (confronting) the bride the moment she enters the groom's jia may be interpreted as an unconscious act to symbolically remove the causes of future conflicts that may result in the breaking up of the jia. The ritual of tea offering establishes and further affirms the concept of "order" in the jia. Senior members are offered tea. This act establishes the seniority of members for the new member, and it is witnessed by the ancestors.

In 1986, during the wedding preparation in the Wu jia, the eldest sister-in-law was making glutinous rice balls as part of the offerings for the gods of the jia altar. She was apologetic for not being able to make all the balls of uniform size. An elderly kinswoman remarked that it was in fact a good sign (hao), because it means "you da you xiao (have bigger ones, have smaller ones)." It is a pun, which also means seniors and juniors have their places in the house. Such order of seniority is reinforced not only in marriage rites, but also seen in funeral rites.

Wider kinship solidarity is also reinforced at the wedding. In the 1986 wedding at Wu jia, all the jia members, and the married-out daughters and their children formed the working party for the wedding. The day before the wedding date, young and able male kinsmen from Huang Jia Shan Lee jia came to help pitch the tent for the

wedding feast. All married-out sisters and married-in sisters-in-law gathered in the kitchen to prepare food for the jia ceremony, which includes feeding the gods and ancestors, and the jia members before the main wedding feast. The wedding feast itself was catered by a rural home caterer. While women were busy in the kitchen, men folks were busy in the hall arranging furniture, and in the front yard pitching tents and organizing tables and chairs. Young men who could drive ran errands to town and to relatives' houses. A clear division of labor was observed.

On the wedding day, friends, neighbors, and relatives of the Wu jia streamed in and crowded the feasting area under the big tent. All the helpers were ziji ren on voluntary basis. A group of four young ladies and one young man, the children of two Wu sisters and one paternal cousin brother, volunteered to help serve drinks (pouring brandy, beer, and orange soda for the guests).

When the guests all left, the cleaning of the feasting area began. The male members and relatives lowered the tent and removed the furniture, the female members brought the water hose and the coconut fibre brooms to clean the littered front yard and the dining area at the back room of the house. The bride joined the sisters-in-law in the cleaning up of her own wedding

feast. The wedding ceremony began at noon. By six pm, the bride became an active part of the jia group, working together with all the jia members. When the cleaning was done, the bride was heard talking in the kitchen with the eldest Wu sister-in-law about daily routines, when to wash laundry (still by hand), when to cook meals.

Rites of passages such as the wedding described above, and funerals that will be described below, serve as occasions when jia membership is identified, adjusted, and reinforced. This is done primarily in front of the ancestors' seat. Ancestors are actively involved in the wedding rituals because a new member is brought into their jia, into the agnatic group. Jia harmony and future prosperity depend on the establishment of this new relationship. Ancestors are informed of the marriage, and they witness the ceremony. By doing so, jia order is reinforced; the past is linked with the present; and the future prosperity of the jia is hopefully secured.

B. Funeral Rite

Another rite of passage that clearly demonstrates jia membership is seen in the funeral rite. Funeral rites, like marriage rites, vary in scale and in detail. But the occasion itself is directly linked to the jia as a descent group. The death of the senior Wu observed in 1979 serves as an example.

The Old Mr. Wu was the founder of the Wu jia in

Malaysia. He lived to be a prominent member of the community through his contribution to Chinese education in local schools. Before he died at the age of eighty-two, he was on the board of directors of a local Chinese primary school which he started and promoted. His death rite was observed by many local people.

Mr. Wu had no siblings in Malaysia. But there were some relatives of the Wu surname from the same village in China. They were considered as _ziji ren_ (our own people) by the Wu _jia_. During the death rite, most of the Wu agnatic kindred was present at the Wu house, mourning and helping for six continuous days. Different color mourning dress was assigned to different grades of relatives. Old Wu's Children and their spouses wore black shirts and black pants, grandchildren wore blue shirts and blue shorts. They were all made of new cotton cloth. All male descendants and their conjugal families observed the 100 days mourning period. Daughters could discard the mourning dress when the funeral was over because they had to go back to their husband's _jia_ to resume daily life there.

Mr. Wu's body was already laid in the covered coffin when I began my observation on the third day. His eldest grandson, one of the chief mourners (the other being his father, the eldest son of the deceased) told me that Grandfather's body was moved to lay on the floor in

the center of the front hall and his bed in the bedroom was dismantled right away so that his soul would not linger around the bed, unwilling to depart this world. The soul of the dead at this stage is perceived as dangerous. It might enter the living and make the person go into trance or suffer a serious illness. The priest-monk symbolically coaxed and captured the soul and led it into a seat symbolized by a fu (charm paper). All non-jia participants and visitors were given a red thread to tie around the wrist when they left. Red is the opposite to the death color of white, and it counters the probable danger associated with death.

After the lid of the coffin was covered, for three nights the two Taoist priest-monks performed death rituals, symbolically leading the jia members, to accompany the deceased through the liminal phase of death, finally crossing the river to enter the other world. One particular ritual I witnessed involved the plucking of orange leaves from a branch each mourner was given. Clad in deep mourning black clothes and wearing a coarse hemp conical shaped head dress, all the children, their spouses, and the grandchildren of the deceased walked in a circle. The priest-monk chanted in stylized Hakka dialect the generalized life history of the deceased, his life achievements and his sufferings. Following the instructions of the priest-monk, the

encircling mourners walked through life with the dead. At each occasion when sufferings were mentioned, a leaf was plucked and thrown to the ground. With the assistance of all the mourners, the sufferings were all rid of by the end of the ceremony.

During the rites, the name of each jia member was read aloud from a book to the gods of the four cardinal directions. These are also the members that would observe deep mourning, as witnessed by gods of all four directions. In the case of mourning, all daughters of the deceased also observe the rites, but not their children. Though mourning is a jia obligation, the obligation extends to people who directly receive life from the dead. This obligation is part of the ancient Confucian rule of the wu fu, five mourning grades (Also see Hsu 1963:63ff; Baker 1979). The principle behind the wu fu relationship is the obligation of filial piety. The five mourning grades are not rigidly observed, but the principle is followed in variously modified forms.

Like the marriage rite of passage, the death rite provides the opportunity for members of the jia to publicly identify membership, perform joint rites, and to demonstrate group loyalty as witnessed by all other community participants and the gods of all cardinal directions. Besides, there is an added force to conform, the soul of the recently deceased who, in the liminal

stage, is said to be fierce. The bed of the dead was dismantled to prevent the soul from lingering around the bedroom, yellow charms (fu) were pasted in the living room and outside the doorway to protect the living from the menace of the wandering soul of the dead. Ancestors may be benevolent, but the soul of the dead before it turns into an ancestor is feared. This fear must have some power in reinforcing socially sanctioned behavior, in this case the observance of mourning by the jia members.

The relatedness of an individual to the deceased determines the color and grade of mourning. The degree of relatedness also determines the type of responsibility an individual is allowed to take up in a funeral. Individuals in deep mourning are not supposed to sew their own mourning dress. Unrelated individuals will not be willing to sew the mourning dress in fear of pollution connected with death. The affinal kindred usually takes up the responsibility as a part of the general reciprocal behavior. The assistance provided by the kindred described earlier in this chapter demonstrates such reciprocity. Differential obligations in the funeral rituals not only identify membership of the jia, they also reaffirm reciprocal relationships for the kindred.

The formal burial rite is participated in by the jia members, and accompanied by the daughters of the

deceased. As mentioned earlier, some daughters may not attend the formal burial rite because their mothers-in-law many not sanction it. While the funeral procession may consist of a large crowd of people (relatives, friends, bands of musicians and onlookers), the formal burial rite is exclusively the right and obligation of the jia members and the consanguines of the dead. The Wu funeral procession from the jia home to the cemetery was attended by more than two hundred people. At the foot of the yi shan, the Hakka dialect/territory association cemetery, the crowd dispersed, leaving only the sons and their conjugal families, and two married-out daughters. They paid their filial duty. In return, only this exclusive group of people were rewarded with the blessings from the dead. At the end of the burial, the priest-monk threw handfuls of uncooked rice across the grave to the kneeling mourners. Everyone held the bottom edge of his or her shirt to catch the rice. I was told that this rice was to be cooked with other rice for dinner that evening. A few old Chinese coins were among the rice thrown to the mourners. Hung on the neck of the young children, they protect the health of the young, bao ping an.

When this exclusive group of mourners finally returned home, the priest-monk was waiting at the jia door. A pail of pink water was placed outside the front

door with a comb next to it. All the mourners symbolically washed their faces with this pink water, and combed their hair with the comb dabbed in the water. Everyone knelt outside the door awaiting the news from the priest-monk as to whether the soul of the deceased was pleased with the funeral. The priest-monk burned incense, chanted, then threw the divination wood pieces. In this particular incidence, it took the priest-monk three times before a "head" and a "tail" were obtained. The soul was pleased with his descendants.

When the funeral rite is over, the female _jia_ members take up the responsibility of the daily worship, even during the hundred-day mourning period. The eldest Wu _jia_ daughter-in-law was the one who cooked a separate meal for the deceased father-in-law three times a day. She placed the food on the temporary altar for the father-in-law against the right side of the wall in the front hall, as the priest-monk had indicated, not on the central altar. Next to the temporary altar was a pail of water with a towel for the dead to cleanse himself before the meal. (As the soul was still a ghost, it did not have the proper home for daily cleaning yet. This water and towel were never offered to ancestors on the altar.) The eldest daughter-in-law wailed in front of the altar three times a day for one hundred days, inviting the dead to enjoy the food. She served her father-in-law when he

was living; she continued her duty as a daughter-in-law when he was dead.

The role of women in the _jia_ rituals has been erroneously identified by Freedman as being used as a buffer to withstand the potential danger of the ancestors. I have argued that the ritual behavior of the women in the _jia_ daily rituals represents an extension of the social roles of the women in rural Chinese society. Through the female, the past of the _jia_ is linked with the present and the future. I would argue further that male members of the _jia_ represent the link, in the public domain, in rituals performed at the funeral rites and at the burial site. Female members of the _jia_ practice the link, in the domestic domain of the _jia_. The participation of the female in the _jia_ is through her connection with the male members by marriage. The descent ideology can almost be seen as having two domains of existence, the public and the domestic. In the public domain, men represent the descent ideology; in the domestic domain, women preserve the descent ideology. Women's role in the _jia_ is thus more significant than is believed.

Ahern argued that ancestor worship is closely related to inheritance. Using data from Ch'i-nan, Ahern argued that if one inherits property from another, he must worship that person regardless of descent. If one

is a direct descendant of another person, he may or may not worship the person (1973:149ff). Based on her formulation; the members of a jia without any inheritance may not worship their ancestors. Ancestors with no inheritance to pass on to their descendants may not have anyone to take care of their afterlife. Wolf tended to agree with Ahern, but suggested that "both descent and inheritance create an absolute obligation to the dead" (1976:361).

My data came primarily from rural Chinese Malaysian communities where lineage organization is absent and jia inheritance has been generally lacking. But ancestor worship is commonly observed in these communities and remains persistent. Jia rituals continue to link the living with the dead, and bind the members to the jia group regardless of the presence or absence of inheritance. The feelings of obligation for the descendants to continue the male line and to worship the ancestors are very much alive among villagers in Nan Mei, a business and residential rural community, and Huang Jia Shan, a previously farm-based community. The same can be said of several other rural communities surrounding Nan Mei and Huang Jia Shan.

The Wu jia, for example, has not had land or other property to inherit for two consecutive generations, and the house the eldest male descendant and

his conjugal family continue to live in is built on rented land. The _jia_ has been practicing ancestor worship since the old pioneer father settled down in Malaya. The ancestors then were a group of unspecified agnatic Wus in a general sense. Since then, the pioneer father and his wife have joined the ancestors. All the Wu descendants continue worshipping the ancestors, but now they have two identifiable ancestors among the general ancestors. My preliminary data indicate that perhaps descent alone may be sufficient to obligate a person to worship ancestors.

Yang in his analysis of the Chinese religion stated that the ancestor cult functions to cement the family social organization of the Chinese. He predicts that as westernization impinges on the Chinese urban society, many families will cease to have the altar installed in the family hall. The loss of the altar will lead to the dissolution of the Chinese family (Yang 1967:300).

In rural Malacca, the wage economy has been observed as a force that leads the _jia_ as an economic unit to the dispersion of the _jia_ members. In urban areas such as Kuala Lumpur, many residents have not installed the family altar in the living room. Not all urban Chinese install a _Tian Gong_ red shrine outside their front door. Daily rituals may be diminishing in

many urban homes. But evidence from the villages has shown that out-migrants from the village who set up households in different parts of the country return to their kampong (original home) to attend rituals, especially the annual festivities of the Chinese New Year, and Qing Ming. The presence or absence of the altar does not seem to determine whether the family will worship its ancestors. (Also see Freedman 1970:172.) But it is valid to ask the question: two more generations from now, when the jia grows further in depth, where will the locus of joint ancestor worship be?

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

The unit that preserves the traditional descent ideology in rural Chinese communities has been the main concern of this study. Data from this study support the suggestion that the jia, or the family group, is the locus of patrilineal ideology. Before summarizing the findings and drawing conclusions, I will briefly discuss the treatment of the Chinese family in the literature pertaining to this study.

The Family in the Literature

As mentioned earlier, Freedman's paradigm has greatly influenced the direction of studies on Chinese social organization. Freedman in his study of the lineage system of Chinese society identified the family as the basic unit that creates human beings and provides the personnel for manning the wider institutions, the lineage among them. The family may be in elementary form, or it may extend into a joint or grand family. (1966:43) In his 1953 study of the Chinese in Singapore, Freedman suggested that in homeland China at the base of the lineage system "stands the elementary family..."

(p.19). The elementary family by itself may constitute a household. An extended family with several generations living under one roof may also constitute a household. "This elementary or extended family as household is the fundamental unit of Chinese rural society" (p.19). The household, according to Freedman, is a group of people living together under one roof and maintaining a unified system of cooking and budgeting (p.19).

Major recent studies on the Chinese family have been conducted in Taiwan. Their contributions to our understanding of this patrilineal kinship based institution have been discussed in Wolf's essay on "Domestic Organization" (1981). Two primary concerns of the major studies are in the area of property rights and adaptation of the domestic group to its external contexts. The former is represented by Ahern (1973) and Cohen (1976); the latter is represented by Pasternak (1972).

Pasternak studied Ta-t'ieh, a Hakka village and Chung-she, a Hokkien village in central Taiwan. His work focused on community integration and particularly on the integrative role of agnatic ties. According to his analysis, the shape of Chinese families, the changing institutions of marriage, and family ties with non-agnatic kin are primarily determined by external forces--by the economy, by the availability of facilities such as

irrigation, and by government policies. He suggested that the Chinese domestic institutions are very flexible. They are like "a box of tools." People use those that suit the job at hand but do not discard the others (Cited in Wolf 1981:345). Other studies on Taiwan on the institution of meal rotations (old parents taking turns in living and eating meals at different son's houses), and the institution of minor marriages (adopting young girls for future daughters-in-law) also support the notion that domestic institutions are adaptive to the social, economic contexts in different times and places (Li 1982:14-16).

Ahern's important study conducted in a Hokkien village in northern Taiwan, Ch'inan, tied family organization to ancestor worship. Her arguments emphasized the relationship between the obligation to worship the ancestors and the presence or absence of inheritance. The rights to inheritance impose on a person the obligation to worship the provider of the inheritance, be it an agnate or not. Wolf's observations in northern Taiwan largely supported Ahern's thesis. But Wolf suggested that the duty to worship ancestors is also linked to obligation, not just inheritance (Wolf 1976). Li also commented that Ahern was correct in her observations, but she was dealing with one of the three principles that govern the ritual behavior of ancestor

worship, that of descent relationship. He proposed father-son relationship (for memorialism and filial duty), descent relationship (as expressed in rights and obligations), and power relationship (as expressed in segmentation and the balance of power between branches) as the three principles at work (Li 1981:9-10).

Cohen's work in Yen-liao, on the western plain of southern Taiwan, focused on the relationship between family organization and its economic arrangements. Like Ahern, Cohen suggested that domestic relationship can only be understood with reference to property rights. Cohen's data revised Freedman's tradition of jural rights and authority relationship within the family institution. He proposed that large families existed in Yen-liao not because of strong pater authority as Freedman suggested, but because of economic advantages perceived in resource pooling by the family group and the calculated self-interest of the sons, the pater's coparceners. Like Pasternak, Cohen believed that the basic organization and the principles behind the families, simple or complex, are everywhere the same. All that varies are the conditions that make large families more or less advantageous economically.

Another important aspect of family relationship investigated in Taiwan is the power relationship within the family. M. Wolf provided a major contribution to the

study of the role of women in patrilineal biased Chinese family. From a conflict point of view, Wolf suggested that women are not merely the submissive half of the family. They want to control their own lives and the lives of others. While men's power is supported by the patrilineal bias of male authority and property rights, women try to gain power within the system by way of manipulating the allegiance of their children. Women's power is one dimension of power relationships traditionally neglected by researchers. M. Wolf suggested that this power structure "has no ideology, no formal structure, and no public existence. It is built out of sentiments and loyalties that die with its members, but it is no less real for all that" (1972:37).

Taiwan studies on the family on the whole show that Chinese domestic institutions are extraordinarily flexible. Some basic principles provide for the coherence and continuity of the family institution. But the Chinese family institution is flexible enough to accommodate modifications and selective rule adoptions. How Chinese communities preserve the rules, and how long such a combination of "uniform ideas and diverse behavior" could endure are some of the questions that greatly interest anthropologists today (Wolf 1981:325).

The most detailed ethnographic work on the overseas Chinese family in the Nanyang (South Seas) is

Freedman's study on the family and marriage in Singapore. Freedman conducted his study in Singapore from 1949 through 1950. The household in Singapore is defined in terms of co-residence and domestic economic co-operation, and it is not necessarily a unit in which all members are kin. But Freedman was quick to add that the household "...as in the West and China, is essentially a family grouping" (1953:27). He identified the household as "the only clearly marked-out kinship unit in Chinese society" in Singapore.

Freedman distinguished descent groups from kinship groups, argued that formal organization of the agnatic grouping (the patri-lineage) is absent in overseas Chinese communities, but asserted that the agnatic principle remains the basis for activities in same surname, as well as dialect/territorial associations. The household is the only kinship unit with clearly defined boundaries and activities. Its internal relationship is more marked by kinship, and the organization is primarily that of an elementary family. The exceptions noted by Freedman include servants and employees living in the same household. Freedman also observed that the identification with a surname, which the Chinese traditionally use as one of the markers to demonstrate common descent, has a modified meaning. "As the locally-born generations take over from their

immigrant forebears, the surname, rather than traceable descent, assumes the role of marking agnatic kinship" (1953:225).

The ethnographic descriptions Freedman provided in his study of the mid-20th century Chinese in Singapore can be readily used to describe the rural Chinese of Malacca I studied in the 1980s. Unlike the family group in homeland China, the basic family group in rural Singapore and in rural Malacca is no longer a political-legal unit with corporate status--it does not stand as the base of the local government administrative hierarchy, and it is not necessarily a production unit, as diversification of the family economy combines the cultivation of land with wage income. Because of individual workers' direct access to income, the authority of the family head is not concentrated, and women may not be passive economic agents in the family group. And, marriage is not understood as alliance-building between two descent groups. But nonetheless, the traditional patrilineal principles based on sex and age still prevail. Domestic worship, as well as rituals performed at home and at the grave site by agnatic kinsmen, involve the worship of gods and patrilineal ancestors.

In addition to Freedman's work in Singapore, Newell in 1962 published his study of the Chinese in

Treacherous River, a natural village (as compared with the New Villages) in Province Wellesley on the west coast of Malaysia across from the island of Penang. In this Teochew-speaking primarily farming village, the average time of residence was under 20 years (as of 1955), and most villagers had insufficient property for a traditional system of Chinese inheritance to operate. Newell identified the smallest kinship unit as the family, and the smallest working unit as the household. No clan or descent organization higher than the family was present in the village, and the significant kinship ties were mainly between parents and children, between brothers, and between close relatives of the wife or daughter. (1962:51,58,72)

The general findings, about the family and the family group, ~~of these two studies are~~ supported by studies of the overseas Chinese communities in Indonesia (Willmott 1960) and in Thailand (Skinner 1957). Formal descent organization, the patri-lineage, failed to be transplanted to the *Nanyang*, and the family became the basic and only kinship based unit among these overseas Chinese.

Findings of This Study

This study was conducted in rural Chinese villages over two time periods. Casual observations were

made between 1972 and 1982, and actual fieldwork was conducted in 1986, some thirty-six years after Freedman's study in Singapore, and thirty years after Newell's study in northwestern Malaysia. Data from this study of rural Chinese communities in Malacca confirm that nuclear families as well as joint or extended families living under one roof are important kinship units in rural Malacca. In addition, however, several such residentially-based family units, as well as unmarried sons and daughters living and working in other locations, may be linked together in a common unit, the _jia_, which is defined on the basis of agnatic descent. Such linked families may share or coordinate their economic resources, but the basis of their relationship is close patrilineal descent. The traditional descent ideology is the fundamental principle that organizes the _jia_, and the descent ideology is expressed in shared rituals.

The _jia_ is composed of a group of patrilineally related descendants of the same line of ancestors. The _jia_ may be in the form of a conjugal family, such as the pioneer immigrants often established. The _jia_ at this stage is an economic unit. When this conjugal family develops, it may assume the form of a more complex family group including several conjugal families of one or more than one generations, as a patrilineal stem family, or an extended (or grand) family; or it may break up into

several families with separate households. Each constituent family may be an independent economic unit. At these late expansion and dispersion stages of development, the _jia_ may cease to be a unit of production and consumption in a rigid sense. The expanding wage economy, coupled with diminishing farm land resulting from local industrialization, encouraged the break-up of the _jia_ as a production unit. But the _jia_ maintained its centripetal force as a source of identity in the lives of the members. Today it serves as an asylum for the _jia_ members in time of economic difficulty. In turn, it continues to receive remittances in the form of gifts, for the support of its dependents as well as for the maintenance of _jia_-based joint activities. The _jia_ economy, thus, can be unified or it can be dispersed depending on the development stage of the _jia_, and the economic political situation of the wider society. The idea of the _jia_ as a group based on common descent appears to be a strong enough force to maintain continuous ties among its members regardless of the absence of shared common property or partible inheritance, contrary to what previous studies have suggested.

The _jia_ in rural Malacca largely grew out of pioneer immigrants' conjugal families, and extended to not more than three or four generations due to shallow

immigration history. Because of the individualistic nature of Chinese immigration to these rural villages in Malacca, most pioneer generation immigrants had few clansmen in a general sense in Malaya (i.e., from the same village in China, or from the same dialect or territorial groups in southeastern China). Some clansmen subsequently went back to China, and some had few survivors in Malaysia. Consequently, the individual pioneer immigrants to Malaysia became the only ancestors the Chinese descendants in Malacca could identify with. However, on the "ancestors' seat", the shen wei, the close, named ancestors join the unnamed general ancestors of the descent line, to be worshipped by the descendants.

The jia is a ritual unit. During my fieldwork, two types of rituals were observed: rituals performed on a regular basis for the jia and its members in the domestic domain, and rituals performed in the eyes of the public. Daily rituals and annual celebrations such as death anniversaries of jia ancestors and the Chinese New Year celebrations belong to the domestic domain; whereas the Qing Ming grave clearing, funerals, and weddings are performed under the observation of the community. Both types of rituals focus on the worship of patrilineal ancestors.

Rituals in the domestic domain include the worship of the gods installed in and outside the

dwelling, and the gods and ancestors on the household altar. The action of worship, or bai, of the gods and the ancestors in the domestic domain is the same, but the nature of the bai and the functions of the two sets of supernatural beings are different. The gods are invited into the dwelling from their temples for the convenience of daily worship. Through the daily worship they are invoked to provide protection to the worshippers. Ancestors are linked to their living descendants exclusively, and they depend on these descendants to maintain their well being after death. Ancestors are consulted on important decisions, informed of jia-related affairs, and in return, provide protection to the living. The worship of the ancestors represents the extension of the filial obligations of the junior members of the jia to their seniors. And the protection from the ancestors is seen as an extension of the interest parents have for their offspring.

The ritual worship observed in the domestic domain is generally performed by one representative of the jia, often the most senior female. Though the action is performed by one member of the group, the benefits are supposedly for the entire group, not the individual. In the case of a the jia in which constituent members have dispersed living arrangements, each individual living unit may have its own gods. Ancestors' shen wei,

however, may be missing from the branch family altar. For memorialism, an incense burner for the recently deceased may be placed on the family altar to receive daily worship by individual families, but the "seat" of the ancestors often remains at the old jia house, to be cared for by the senior son of the jia ancestor. This practice is also documented elsewhere, e.g., by Hu in China (1948:32), and Sung in northern Taiwan (1981:369).

The ritual worship observed in the public domain may be performed inside the home, such as the wedding, and part of the funeral ceremony; it may be performed outside the home, such as the zuo zhai (part of the death ritual where the priest-monk, in the company of the mourners, symbolically leads the dead through the path over the river to the other world), and the burial procession. In these ritual activities, besides the individual persons involved (the marrying couple, or the dead person), the most senior male descendant of the jia presides at the ritual, in which jointly participate all members of the jia group, publicly observed by the community. The focal point of these rituals is the ancestors. In the case of the wedding, the ancestors witness the expansion of the living group of descendants to ensure that the continuity of the jia line is achieved with the introduction of a new bride. In the case of the funeral, the ancestors receive a new member into the

community of the dead, and they are once more assured that the dead will continue to be taken care of. Through these ritual occasions, the exclusive membership of the _jia_ is identified, order of seniority by age and generation is demonstrated, and group solidarity is reinforced.

Freedman suggested that in Singapore, domestic worship demonstrates only "memorialism," not agnatic solidarity. "Domestic worship," according to Freedman's definition, is worship performed outside the lineage hall by individual households. It lacks the collective behavior of the agnatic group worshipping as a whole. As "domestic worship" does not entail solidarity and corporation, he did not consider it a behavior that reinforces lineage solidarity. Similarly, as ancestor worship in Singapore did not appear to gather descendants as a body for worship, Freedman suggested that it did not serve the function of reinforcing group solidarity. (Freedman 1953:46,48,221,216) I have argued that the rituals in the domestic domain and the public domain described in this study, which Freedman would call domestic worship, do in fact serve to reinforce patrilineal identity. Daily rituals performed in the domestic domain are organized on the household level for memorialism, as Freedman suggested; but rites of passage such as the marriage and the funeral are organized on the

jia level to be witnessed by the entire community, with the ancestors as the focal point. Both daily rituals and rites of passage are for the benefit of the _jia_ as a patrilineal group.

It has been suggested by Ahern that ancestor worship is closely related to inheritance. Cohen's study also proposed that the estate is one of the three aspects of a domestic group (which he called the _chia_), and is the cementing force of the group. Data from family groups in this study challenge the suggestion that the estate and the rights to the estate are essential to the existence of the patrilineally defined group and the obligation to perform ancestor worship. My field data from family groups without an estate or an inheritance suggest that the absence of inheritance and estate does not eliminate the obligation of _jia_ members to worship their ancestors, nor does it result in the disintegration of the _jia_. Furthermore, the _jia_ remains as an integrated ritual unit even after it has relinquished its role as an economic unit.

So we see that the _jia_ has two aspects: the _jia_ as an economic unit, and the _jia_ as a ritual unit. The economic _jia_ may break into sub units, and further branch into sub-sub-units. The ritual _jia_ remains as a higher order agnatic unit, unifying the branch units through rituals. The unifying force is the shared sentiment of

common agnatic descent, reinforced by the sense of obligation of sons to parents and the belief that the welfare of the dead depends on the living. Both of these ideas are closely associated the ideology of agnatic descent.

The Descent Group as a Conceptual Unit

The *jia* as a descent group is thus a unit of symbolic identification. It lacks the formal bureaucratic organization, the material property, and the close territorial propinquity of the descent group described in homeland China. Yet it shares with that traditional lineage organization the basic principle of descent. A comparison of the characteristics of the *jia* with that of the lineage described by Freedman, and Hsu will demonstrate this point.

The descent group in homeland China, the lineage, is characterized by the following properties (Freedman 1953:17-18; Also Hsu 1963:61):

a. localized village and long history of residence
b. patrilineal descent
c. rule of exogamy
d. rule of patrilocal residence
e. an ancestral hall
f. ritual worship of common ancestors
g. a genealogy book of lineage rules and descent records
h. owning and exploiting land and other property as a unit
i. centralized leadership
j. a naming system to identify generation
k. segmentation process of the descent group into sub units

The descent group, the jia found in rural Malacca, lacks the properties related to localized residence (a, d), shared properties (e, h), administrative organization (d, g, i), and power hierarchy (i, k). However, it shares the same characteristics that are related to patrilineal descent ideas and the preservation of the ideas (b, c, f, j).

The differences between the descent group Freedman identified in China and the descent group I documented in rural Malacca must be seen in light of Freedman's strict definition of the descent group. Freedman defines the descent group as a jural corporation, following Maine's and Fortes' British social anthropology tradition from a legal standpoint. As a jural corporate unit, the descent group becomes an institution that has its physical existence and endures over time. Members of this institution are trustees of, not owners of the corporation. As a corporation, the descent group must have a shared estate, in the form of land, business, or other exploitable properties. Members of the descent group have equal access to the estate. In return for these rights in the common estate, they share obligations to the group as well. Such formalized descent groups have been observed in southeastern China.

In contrast to Freedman, I have argued that a descent group is a conceptual unit. It is sustained by

the descent ideology which imposes rights and obligations on its members. These rights and obligations alone are sufficient to bind members together. The focal point of the descent group is the ancestors, the force that links the past and the present. Unity of the group is expressed by rituals centering on the worship of ancestors. This ritual expression is observed among rural Chinese villagers in Malacca, as well as among rural Chinese in Singapore as Freedman himself described.

Although the data may be far from sufficient, the tentative conclusion may be that the Chinese descent group is a conceptual unit which exists without the jural aspects of the estate and the rights and obligations to the corporate unit. This idea is not new. Chinese scholars have long been arguing that the lineage grew out of the family. Hu stated that "The _tsu_ [lineage or clan] regards itself as having grown out of one single family, that of the founder, and relationship terms and approved patterns of behavior are derived from family organization." He regarded the _chia_, the family group, as "the relationship group holding property in common and maintaining a common household," and he noted that the structure of both the _chia_ and the _tsu_ is strictly patrilineal (1948:15). Hsu suggested that the "clan" (the formalized descent group) is "...an extension of the joint family with unilineal descent and is based on the

consanguine principle" (1963:61). Strauch cited Hayes in her discussions of the patrilineal ideology among the villagers of Fung Yuen and other multilineage villages southeastern China (1983:45). Hayes was of the opinion that the Confucian values of filial piety and elder veneration, obviously extended readily from the family to the lineage. Liu and Hsu both alluded to the Confucian doctrine of filial piety as underlying the family group and the lineage descent group (Liu 1956:87; Hsu 1968:29).

The jia as I have defined it in Malaysia may be postulated as the basic descent group where descent ideology is preserved, and from which the formal descent group may expand under favorable conditions. The formalized lineage type descent group as described in China is an elaboration of this basic descent group. Such formalized lineage type descent groups develop when conditions encourage it (Freedman 1958; Potter 1970; Pasternak 1985). The larger lineage organization atrophies when conditions are not favorable for its existence (Anderson 1972; Pasternak 1970). Localized residence, shared properties, administrative organization, and power hierarchy are added mechanisms for the maintenance of an elaborated formal grouping.

Why does the descent group persist? Why does the jia persist in overseas Chinese communities? In rural Malacca, at least, the jia on the one hand fulfills

its functions as the basic kinship based unit, providing material and emotional support to its members. On the other hand, the jia is a descent-based conceptual unit consolidated by the descent obligation of filial piety. This filial obligation extends to the dead as well as the living. The belief in a reciprocal relationship between the ancestors and the living further strengthens the ideology. The jia as we have observed in rural Malacca is a social welfare unit, caring for the aged and the ancestors. The duty of caring is assigned to the male descendants of the line, to be carried out by the female members of the jia, often the wives.

The descent group as a chain linking the past with the future is an emic metaphor that sees each generation of descendants as a part of this chain of continuity in the bigger frame of time. This metaphor has been cited very vividly in M. Wolf's ethnography of the Lim family group in northern Taiwan (1968:26,45,74). The filial obligation of the descendants to the ancestors includes the extension of the male line so that the chain does not break. This view remains strong among the older generation in rural Malacca, who on average have twice as many children as the next generation. The obligation to extend the line is not an important concern of the younger people, but the idea of needing male children to take care of them in old age appears to be salient even

among today's young adults.

As a point of departure for further research, another function of the descent group may be perceived from the view point of ethnic identity and assimilation. With the exception of the _Babas_ (the descendants of mixed marriages between the immigrant Chinese and local Muslim women, often of lower status, during the colonial period in the Straits Settlements of Malacca, Penang, and Singapore), the Chinese in Malaysia have not been able to completely assimilate into the Malay community (Vaughan 1879; Chia 1980). Even the _Babas_ were only partially accepted by the Malay community. Reasons which have been suggested for this difficulty of assimilation include political rivalry, economic competition, religion, and food preference. The persistence of the Chinese descent group may be perceived by some as a response to the frustrating assimilation process. If so, the Malaysian Chinese would be seeking to maintain their distinctiveness from the local Malay population by intentionally expressing their Chineseness to themselves. The utter lack of any unilineal kinship organization among the Malays would make the contrast with Chinese agnatic descent particularly striking. The persistence of rituals in both the domestic domain and the public domain may be the result of such response. On the other hand, the feeling of insecurity early immigrants

experienced in the not so hospitable foreign land may have also encouraged the persistence of the traditional belief system, which includes the worship of ancestors and other deities. The inclusion of local datuk (local regional guardian spirits, the undomesticated wondering native spirits of the land) into the Chinese belief system is an evidence of such insecurity. The persistence of the Chinese descent ideology in an immigrant society in relation to assimilation and ethnic identity is a topic that deserves further investigation.

Will the jia, the descent group develop further and flourish into full scale lineage organization in Malaysia? The lineage is traditionally a localized formal organization, but the existence of a lineage organization requires favorable conditions. These conditions have been discussed by Freedman, Potter, and Pasternak. Watson's study of the Man lineage in the New Territories in Hong Kong (Watson 1975) further suggested that the persistence of the lineage organization requires its members to recognize the practical advantage of having such an organization. The rural Chinese in Malacca, driven by the force of the wage economy and pushed by the diminishing ability to make a living by vegetable farming, are no longer willing to remain localized. Patrilineal ideology remains, but patrilocal residence has long been disregarded. In addition, social

and political institutions, with the exception of old age care, and a wide range of social relations with non-kin have taken over the political, legal, and social functions served by the lineage organization in the homeland, and by the voluntary associations in overseas Chinese communities during early immigration history. Unless a descent based group can fulfil functions that cannot be fulfilled by existing institutions, a formalized descent group like the lineage is unlikely to evolve. A less formalized descent ideology based group, like the jia, is more likely to endure. How long the jia will endure in Malaysia is something worth investigating in the future.

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APPENDIXES

A. BASIC STATISTICS

Sample population

	#houses	#population
Haung Jia Shan	74	675
Nan Mei	51	407
Sa Le	35	245

Average Size of Household

	average	range
Huang Jia Shan	9	2 - 21
Nan Mei	8	2 - 17
Sa Le	7	3 - 16

Household Structure

	nuclear	stem	extended	joint
Huang Jia Shan	42%	11%	46%	1%
Nan Mei	45%	23%	31%	0%
Sa Le	54%	21%	17%	6%

Household Head Occupation Profile

	wage	farming	self employed
Huang Jia Shan	24%	53%	23%
Nan Mei	31%	6%	63%
Sa Le	37%	49%	14%

Individual Producer Occupation Profile

	wage	farming	self employed
Huang Jia Shan	45%	40%	15%
Nan Mei	54%	4%	42%
Sa Le	57%	35%	8%

Linguistic Backgroud

	Hainan	Hakka	Hokkian	Hoklo	Others	Total
Huang Jia Shan	0	49	4	13	8	74
Nan Mei	10	15	24	0	2	51

B. DIAGRAMS

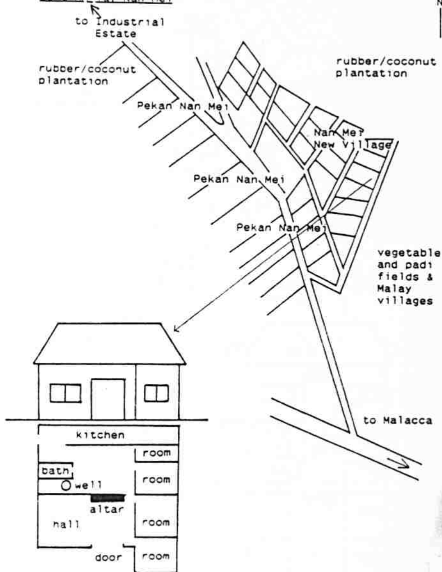


DIAGRAM 1b: Huang Jia Shan

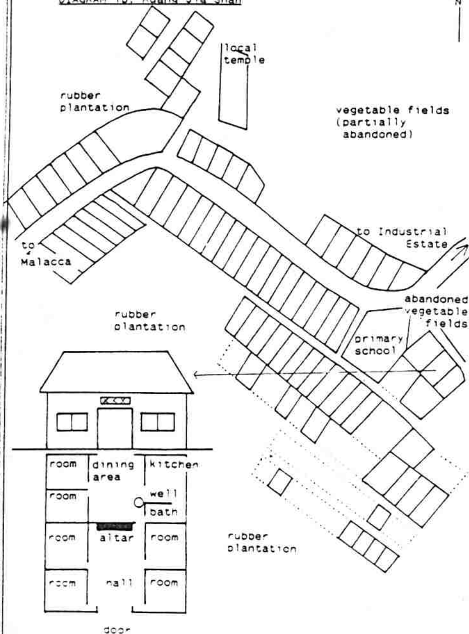


DIAGRAM 2: Lee Jie Fu Jia of Huang Jia Shan

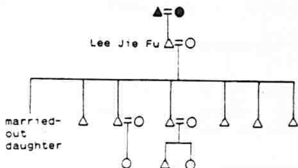


DIAGRAM 3: Ziji Ren Relationship between Mr. Chow and the anthropologist

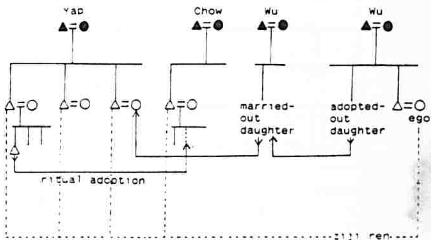


DIAGRAM 4: Ziji Ren Relationship between Mrs. Huang and the Anthropologist

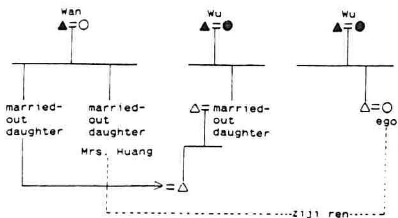


DIAGRAM 5: The Yao Jia of Nan Mei

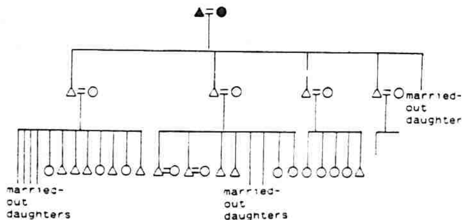


DIAGRAM 6: Lee Long Jiu Jia of Huang Jia Shan

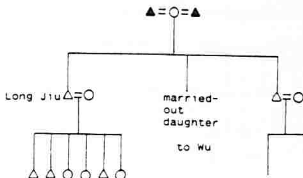


DIAGRAM 7: The Wu Jia of Jin Cun

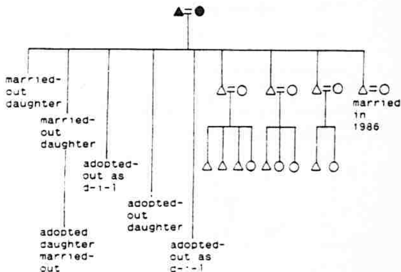


DIAGRAM 8: Lee A Siang Jia of Huang Jia Shan

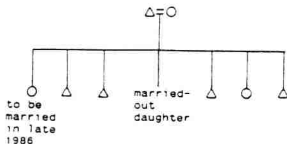


DIAGRAM 9: Lee Bo Mu Jia of Huang Jia Shan

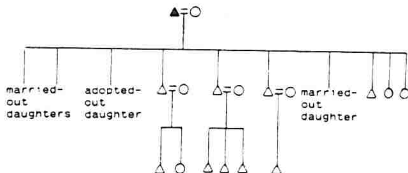


DIAGRAM 10: The Tay Jia of Jin Cun

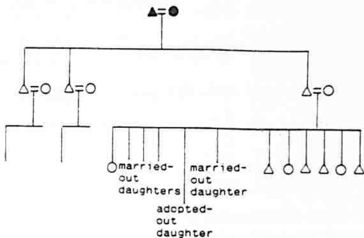
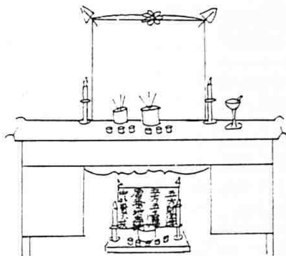


DIAGRAM 11: The Altar of the Yaps at Nan Mei



C. GLOSSARY

ba zi	八字	birth date and time of a person
Baba mama tai xinku le	爸々媽々太辛苦了	father and mother are working too hard for us
bai baba mama	拜爸々媽々	pray to the late father and mother
bai gong gong	拜公々	pray to the late grandfather
bai	拜	ritual worship
bai zuzong	拜祖宗	pray to the ancestors
ban jia zhuong	辦嫁妝	prepare the dowry
bange gong	半個工	half a labor
bao ping an	保平安	provide health and safty
biaojie	表姐	maternal older cousin sister
bu ganjing	不乾淨	polluted; menstruating
bu zhuzai yiqi	不住在一起	not living together
bu ping an	不平安	disturbed; not peaceful
buhao yisi la	不好意思啦	it is embarrassing
chong	衝	direct confrontation
ci fang qian	私房錢	women's private fund
Da Bo Gong	大伯公	the Chinese territorial deity; god of wealth
da bao	打包	pack food in a plastic wrapper to take home

da rizi	大日子	big days; festivals
do she ziji ren	都是自己人	all are our own people
Du Mu	杜牧	name of a Tang poet
Duan Wu	端午	festival around the beginning of summer
duo yige qinren	多一個親人	have an additional kin
fang	房	sub-lineage
fen jia	分家	legal division of the jia property
fu	符	charm paper
gei mama	給媽媽	give to mother
gong	工	labor
gou che	夠吃	enough income to feed all the mouths in the family
gou zuo	夠做	enough work to be done by the available manpower
guan zai ben	棺材本	funeral money
Guan Yin	觀音	goddess of mercy
Guan Gong	關公	god of wealth and justice
guanxi	關係	connections, having someone to pull strings
hao	好	good
hong bao	紅包	a red envelope containing money
hong zhu hui	紅燭會	the red candle association, for helping pay funeral expenses

hui bi	迴避	avoid direct confrontation; hide
huiguan	會館	association
Huizhou Huiguan	惠州會館	Association of the Hakka speakers of the Huizho Fu region in China
ji re	忌日	death anniversary
jia	家	family group; the house; the household
jia zu	家族	clan, lineage
jia zu guan nian	家族觀念	descent ideology
jia zhang	家長	family head
jian mian li	見面禮	welcoming token
jie chang	街場	the main street market area
jiefu dagede rzi	姐夫大哥的兒子	son of the older sister's husband's elder brother
Kai Shan Sheng Wang	開山聖王	the holy king who opened up the jungle
kao shan	靠山	a mountain behind someone as a physical support; financial support
kongsi	公司	early immigrant Chinese social organization
lao ben	老本	old age capital
lao ren yuan	老人院	old people's home
Leeshi Zongci	李氏宗祠	the Lee Surname Association
Long Xi	隴西	place/territory name

luzhu	爐主	the master of the incense burner
mai nur	賣女兒	sell the daughter
mama tangjiede nur	媽々堂姐的女兒	mother's paternal older cousin sister's daughter
ming sui	命水	fate
Nanyang	南洋	the South Seas
ni dui wo hao, wo ye dui ni hao	你對我好我也對你好	you treat me well, I reciprocate
pei qian huo	賠錢貨	girls are lost investments
pin jin	聘金	bride price
ping an	平安	peace and safety
Po Wei Sheng Niang	坡尾聖娘	the holy mother of the South Seas
Qi Yue Ban	七月半	ghost festival
Qing Ming	清明	grave clearing festival
Qingyun Ting	青雲亭	Blue Cloud Temple in the city of Malacca
qishi	其實	in fact; actually
quan	權	authority, power
san le	散了	disintegrated
San Duo Miao	三多廟	a Cantonese temple in the city of Malacca
sao mu	掃墓	sweep the grave, visit the ancestors' graves
shan-ba	山芭	underdeveloped rural areas where rubber plantations are

shen dan	神誕	birthday of the deity
shen zuo; shen wei	神座 神位	the seat of the deity/ancestor
sheng shen	生神	the raw, undomesticated spirits
shi women ziji ren	是我們自己人	are our own people
Shuiwei Shengmu	水尾聖母	fishermen and traveler's deity
sinkeh	新客	new comers from China to southeast Asia
tamen Wu jia	他們吳家	they the Wus
tangjiede rzi	堂姐的兒子	paternal older cousin sister's son
Tian Di	大帝	god of heaven
Tian Gou Niang	天狗娘	a female deity
Tian Gong	天公	god of heaven
tingzhu	亭主	the master of a temple
tong yige zuzong	同一個祖宗	share the same ancestor
tsu, zu	族	clan, lineage
Tu Di	土地	the god of earth
women Lee jia	我們李家	we the Lees
wu fu	五服	five mourning grades
xiangzhu qian	香燭錢	incense and candle money
xifu	媳婦	daughter-in-law
yijin ban chuqu la	已經搬出去啦	already moved out
yijin gia chuqu la	已經嫁出去啦	already married out

yishan	義山	dialectal group/association-owned cemeteries
you da you xiao	有大有小	have big ones, have small ones; have order
Zao Jun	灶君	kitchen god
zheyang cai dui	這樣才對	only that is right
Zhong Qiu	中秋	mid autumn festival
zi	支	branch, sub-lineage
ziji ren laide	自己人來的	our own people
ziji jia ren	自己家人	a member of the jia
zijia ren	自家人	our own people
zong zu	宗族	clan, lineage
zuo zhai	做齋	part of the death ritual

1 5 JUN. 1983